the weekly
Standard

JULY 31, 2006 $3.95

SUEZ AT 50
ARTHUR HERMAN
BOMBS AWAY?
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

HEZBOLLAH'S WAR

WILLIAM KRISTOL: WEAK HORSES
FRED BARNES: A STEADFAST PRESIDENT
JOSEPH BOTTUM: VATICAN VACILLATION
DAN DARLING: HEZBOLLAH'S ARSENAL
JEFFREY GEDMIN: EUROPEANS AND ISRAEL
DAVID GELERNTER: JEWS AGAINST BUSH
LEE SMITH: 'RESISTANCE' IN DAMASCUS

Hezbollah's Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Drugs, Dealers, Danger...Just a Click Away. Are You Watching Your Teens Online? ...*Who Is?*

The Internet unsupervised can be a world of temptation. Pushers peddling pills and make-it-yourself drug recipes. Dealers glorifying marijuana. Bogus "pharmacies" filling orders without prescriptions. "Friends" sending text or instant messages about which parties will have pot or alcohol.

With all the advantages they bring, these technologies, such as Web sites, blogs, spam and text messages, can also expose teens to threats like dangerous drugs and put them in contact with dealers or sexual predators. What can you do? More importantly, what should you do? Parents need to monitor their teens' activities and help them navigate the temptations in the digital world. Here's how:

Learn about the digital devices your teen uses. Visit his Web page or send a text message to her cell phone.

Be clear and consistent about what is off limits — including which Web sites, chat rooms, games or blogs — and how to handle information promoting drugs or sex. Discuss consequences for breaking these rules.

Use technology to help monitor your teen. See for yourself what's posted on social networking sites your teen visits by setting up your own account. Use text messaging to check in with your teen after school.

Know whom your teen is communicating with. Ask who is on his/her cell phone and instant message contact lists. Use every available opportunity to meet and get to know their friends and their parents.

Limit your teen's time spent online, and put computers in a common area of the house so you can more easily monitor their use.

Above all, don't feel uncomfortable with these tactics. You can do it. You're supposed to do it. Because you owe it to them. **For more e-monitoring tips and information on how to use technology to keep your teen drug-free, visit www.TheAntiDrug.com, or call 1-800-788-2800.**

Signed,

American Academy of Pediatrics
Cable in the Classroom
i-SAFE, Inc.
National Institute on Media and the Family
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Partnership for a Drug-Free America
PTA
Web Wise Kids

www.TheAntiDrug.com

PARENTS.
THE ANTI-DRUG.

Office of National Drug Control Policy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutting-Edge Commentary on Public Policy

HOOVER DIGEST
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY

FREE ISSUE

Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Digest without obligation.

Call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverdigest.org

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

What Ancient History Tells Us about the Present

Our strange indifference to events south of the border

Since the election of Hugo Chavez as president of Venezuela in 1998, there has been a drastic erosion of U.S. influence south of the Rio Grande. The most recent manifestations are the election victories of the coca-chewing populist Evo Morales in Bolivia and of the socialist Michelle Bachelet in Chile. And the anti-U.S. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador may very well be elected president of Mexico in July.

It's not as if the new populists in Latin America are trying to duck our attention. Recently Chavez declared, "I think Hitler would be like a suckling baby next to George W. Bush." If Chavez were a Muslim leader, this would be front-page news. But because he says it in Spanish, everyone yawns. Come on, folks. Chavez is sitting on top of 6.5 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

—Niall Ferguson

A Star Is Born

Auf wiedersehen, Gerhard Schröder. Guten tag, Angela Merkel

Although the new German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has a lot of work to do to revive her country's economy, on foreign affairs, she has already demonstrated a voice of moral seriousness and balanced judgment. Perhaps this has something to do with her coming of age in the police state of Erich Honeker's East Germany.

Consider, for example, Mrs. Merkel's response to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: "The absolutely unacceptable provocations of the Iranian president demand a reply from us. No one who has questioned the right of Israel to exist and disavowed the existence of the Holocaust can expect Germany to show the least tolerance in these questions. We [Germans] have learned from our history."

—Tod Lindberg

CALL 800.935.2882 TO RECEIVE A FREE ISSUE.

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 | Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO GINZ.GR
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our plans for biofuels are growing.

Tackling the challenges of supply and clean energy requires a new commitment. So we're planning to invest $500 million over the next 10 years to create the Energy Bioscience Institute, the world's first integrated research center dedicated to applying biotechnology to the energy industry. This continues BP's long-standing commitment to biofuels. In fact, BP has been selling biofuels in the U.S. for more than 25 years. Today, they're available in more than 20 states. It's a start.

bp

beyond petroleum®

© 2006 BP p.l.c.

bp.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

July 31, 2006 • Volume 11, Number 43

2 Scrapbook . . . . . *Der Spiegel, Ralph Reed, and more.*

4 Casual . . . . . *P.J. O'Rourke, chairman.*

5 Editorial . . . . . *Weak Horses*

Articles

6 Letting Israel Be Israel *Bush's consistent approach to war and peace in the Middle East.* . . . . . BY FRED BARNES

8 Let's You and Him Fight *The Syrians cheer on Hezbollah.* . . . . . BY LEE SMITH

10 The Sodano Code *The Vatican's stale policy on the Middle East.* . . . . . BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

11 When Will They Ever Learn . . . *Why do so many Jews hate the president who stands by Israel?* . . BY DAVID GELERNTER

13 Hezbollah's Arsenal *It's more lethal than everyone thought.* . . . . . BY DAN DARLING

14 Europe Meets Israel *What a week for a journalists' junket.* . . . . . BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

16 What a Bleeping Shame *Hollywood wins a copyright victory.* . . . . . BY JONATHAN V. LAST

17 A Man, a Plan, a Canal *What Nasser wrought when he seized Suez a half century ago.* . . . . . BY ARTHUR HERMAN

19 The New Battle of Algeria *National reconciliation can kill you.* . . . . . BY OLIVIER GUITTA

20 Will Casey Strike Out? *Don't count out Rick Santorum.* . . . . . BY SALENA ZITO

Features

22 Intelligence Dominance
A better way forward in Iraq. . . . . . BY RICHARD H. SCHULTZ JR. & ROY GODSON

Books & Arts

27 Scorched Earth *Was the destruction of German cities justified?* . . . . . BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

31 The Visiting Farmer *Paris, 1954, and a close encounter with William Faulkner.* . . . . . BY CYNTHIA GRENIER

33 Mr. Klein Regrets *Longing for the good old days that never were.* . . . . . BY NOEMIE EMERY

36 Wordcross Backwords *A nine-letter word for a species of puzzle.* . . . . . BY MATT GAFFNEY

37 Who Said What? *It's a Mumble in the Jungle on Miami's mean streets.* . . . . . BY JOHN PODHORETZ

39 THE STANDARD READER . . . .Absurdistan *by Gary Shteyngart;* Club Life: The Games Golfers Play *by John Steinbreder.*

40 Parody . . . . . *Katie Couric has good news for you.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor* **Claudia Anderson,** *Managing Editor*
David Tell, *Opinion Editor* **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson,** *Senior Editors* **Philip Terzian,** *Books & Arts Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash, *Senior Writers* **Victorino Matus, David Skinner,** *Assistant Managing Editors*
Matthew Continetti, *Associate Editor* **Jonathan V. Last,** *Online Editor* **Daniel McKivergan,** *Online Foreign Editor*
Sonny Bunch, *Assistant Editor* **Duncan Currie,** *Reporter* **Michael Goldfarb,** *Deputy Online Editor*
Whitney Blake, Joseph Lindsley, *Editorial Assistants*
Lev Nisnevitch, *Art Director* **Philip Chalk,** *Production Director*
Paul Weisner, *Finance Director* **Catherine Lowe,** *Marketing Director*
Taybor Cook, *Office Manager* **Carolyn Wimmer,** *Executive Assistant* **Abigail Lavin,** *Staff Assistant*
Gerard Baker, Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, John J. DiIulio Jr., Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein, David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P. J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*
Terry Eastland, *Publisher*

the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2006, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Spiegel Catalog of Anti-Americanism

This colorful array of lurid, America-baiting covers from the weekly *Der Spiegel* was produced by the peerless critics of the German media at the *Davids Medienkritik* website. They were provoked by a *Spiegel* reporter's article, "Crisis in the Middle East," that began, "The escalation in violence in the Middle East calls for U.S. leadership." This was a surprise, to say the least, from a magazine that usually spreads the America-as-Devil gospel.

Correctly terming this a "classic of the *America-and-Bush-can-do-no-right* genre," *Medienkritik* correspondent "Ray D." (the site is produced by pseudonymous contributors) asked, What about the Europeans? "Where are Germany's master diplomats? Aren't we supposed to solve the world's crises through the U.N. and other *multilateral* channels and not rely on *unilateralist* cowboys? Kofi? Javier? Joschka . . . ?"

"Ray" then drew readers' attention to the, uh, pattern in *Spiegel*'s coverage of U.S. affairs, as evidenced in the habitually sensational covers. "According to *Spiegel*," he notes, "Americans are warmongers, mercenaries, cowboys, Rambos, religious nuts and conceited bungling occupiers who have created a catastrophe-disaster-debacle-quagmire-civil war in the Middle East." And now they call for U.S. leadership. "Could it be that the United States really is a positive force in the world and not the summation of vile stereotypes and chronic biases displayed on German newsstands?"

Here, for the benefit of our non-German speaking readers, is a rough translation of the covers, starting in the upper left corner: Blood for Oil; The Conceited Superpower; The New World Order; World Power without Energy; Operation Rambo; America's Dishonor; Masters of the World; Bush's Vietnam; The Torturers of Baghdad; America's Air War in Afghanistan and the Ghost of Vietnam; On a Mission from God; Leap without Looking; The Next War; Superpower in Quicksand; The (Little) Sheriff; The Hapless Superpower; Will America Become Democratic?; The Neverending War."

The full rant can be found at *medienkritik.typepad.com.* ♦

Typhoid Jack's Latest Casualty

As the political calendar lumbers toward November, last week's Georgia primary election produced some intriguing—and important—results. For one, Democratic Rep. Cynthia McKinney, the noted conspiracy theorist, who made national news most recently after engaging in a scuffle with a Capitol Police officer, was forced into a runoff election against her Democratic challenger, Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr., to be held August 8.

For another, Ralph Reed, the former executive director of the Christian Coalition and *Time* magazine cover model, lost his first campaign for public office, to be the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor, by a whopping 12 percentage points. Back in early 2005, when Reed first made it clear he would run for the post, victory seemed like a sure thing. But that was before this past January, when Reed's longtime friend and sometime business associate, the lobbyist Jack Abramoff, pleaded guilty to mail fraud, tax evasion, wire fraud, and conspiracy.

Earlier in the decade, it turned out, Abramoff's Indian casino clients had paid Reed more than $4 million to gin up "grassroots support" for antigambling initiatives that would insulate them from competition and increase their profits. That Reed had been a longtime opponent of casino gambling did not prevent him from accepting the tribes' payments—and he didn't seem to regret taking the money,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

either, until the press began to look more closely at his self-dealing. In the end, Reed's campaign became one long apology for his association with Abramoff, as his primary opponent, veteran state senator Casey Cagle, hounded him with accusations of corruption and hypocrisy.

Which leaves us with the number three: The three men so far—Rep. Tom DeLay (ret.), former White House procurement director David Safavian (convicted of obstruction and making false statements on June 20), and Reed—whose careers have been adversely affected, if not ruined altogether, because of their involvement with Abramoff's schemes. Will that be the end of this sorry episode? ♦

The Evil Bush Strikes Again

Turns out the French have another reason to hate President Bush: He cost them the World Cup. How's that? Simple "trickle-down politics." Allow *Los Angeles Times* columnist Patt Morrison, writing on July 13, to explain:

> Now we know why France's team captain lost his cool in the World Cup finals and France lost the trophy to Italy.
>
> Terrorism.
>
> Zinedine Zidane, who is of French and Algerian ancestry, headbutted an Italian player who insulted him. Although Zidane . . . would not say what words provoked him, a lip reader hired by the *Times* of London claims Marco Materazzi called Zidane "the son of a terrorist whore."
>
> That's pure trickle-down politics. From the White House to the soccer pitch, "terrorist" has "cooties" and "your mother wears combat boots" flat beat as the top playground potty-mouth slur for the 21st century.
>
> Who's surprised? The Bush administration has been scattering the word like ticker tape on a Manhattan parade. Old McDonald left the farm for the NSA, and now it's here a terrorist, there a terrorist, everywhere a terrorist.

The Scrapbook assures readers this is not a parody. But it does suggest a new slogan for the antiwar left: "Bush lied! Zidane cried!" ♦

Author! Author!

We take pleasure in noting that our contributing editor Joseph Epstein, following on the success of such recent surgical strikes as *Snobbery: The American Version* (2002) and *Envy* (2003), has now turned his attention to the vexed and ambiguous subject of *Friendship: An Exposé* (Houghton Mifflin, 288 pp., $24). Readers of The Weekly Standard scarcely need to be informed about Mr. Epstein's way with words, or the scalpel with which he dissects our wayward culture; but in the spirit of his latest title, we are pleased to issue this friendly reminder to book buyers. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

From the Editor's Chair

I was out on the patio the other day wondering (as writers of conservative opinion pieces constantly do) what's wrong with America. I noticed a tag affixed to my collapsible canvas deck chair, and my wondering ceased. What's wrong with America was printed on the tag:

—Do not attempt to lift the front end of the chair while sitting down on it.

Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that chair manufacturers feel compelled to tell Americans this. You'd flip over and whack your head on the concrete. Yet millions of Americans must sit themselves down, spread their knees, grasp their seats, and give themselves a tremendous backwards yank. How else but whacked heads to explain *myspace.com*, Hillary Clinton's positive poll ratings, *US Weekly* magazine, or the congressional debate on immigration? I had thought the chairs in the House of Representatives were firmly attached to the floor. Apparently not.

The tag continued with other stern admonishments to avoid obvious dangers:

—Do not stand on this product.

—Do not sit on the back support or arm support of this product.

It's a cheap, flimsy collapsible chair. Standing on it would be like standing on moral principle while voicing the Democratic party position on Iraq. The "back support" is a thin sheet of cloth. The "arm support" is likewise. Cautioning Americans against sitting on them is as pathetic—and probably as necessary—as cautioning Americans against sitting Jeffrey Skilling on a corporate board.

I was on the edge of my seat guessing what mindless American behavior the tag would warn of next.

—Do not sit on the edge of seat.

Furthermore the tag declared:

—Be careful not to trap fingers when folding.

Also:

—Weight limit of this chair is 240 lbs.

If current body mass index trends continue, everyone in America over the age of six will be enjoined from relaxing on my patio.

The company that makes this chair is announcing that Americans are too fat and stupid for furniture. The company is, of course, Chinese. That perhaps explains the awkward phrasing in another warning:

—Keep clear of all obstacle children, people when folding and unfolding this product.

I take the point, people—especially you two-career yuppie couple people who are setting the tone in America today. You have your busy professional and social schedules plus your need for time for yourselves so you can practice yoga, attend *An Inconvenient Truth* screenings, and grow as persons. What should we call your one (or occasionally two) offspring except "obstacle children"? The nannies, the daycare, the preschools, the tutoring, the lessons and classes and play groups to which you subject your kids certainly indicate a desire to keep clear of them.

I assumed that the tag had a legal reason for existence. Doubtless, even with America's ridiculous liability laws, a company can avoid some trial lawyer depredations by publishing every conceivable risk entailed in using what it sells. I got out the cell phone that I feel compelled to carry even while lolling in the backyard (another thing that's wrong with America) and called a law firm specializing in such matters. I told the receptionist at O'Shyster, Tortberg and Scammington that I seemed likely to be injured by a folding chair. "However," I said, "despite printed instructions to the contrary, I did not . . .

—Check for damage or tear in fabric. If any damage is found, do not use this product.

. . . so you probably won't want to take my case."

The receptionist told me that John Edwards would be over within the hour; meanwhile I might want to start pricing yachts.

It seems the tag on my chair is just a snarky note, a calculated insult to the American people from a Chinese corporation—maybe from the entire nation of China. Says the tag:

—Use this product on level ground only.

That is the great dream of modern America, level ground for everyone. And if the level is low, way down in the region of Howard Dean's rhetoric, the *New York Times*'s patriotism, or Nick Lachey's talent, so much the better. Then every American can achieve his or her dream, which is, as far as I can tell, to be on TV. Star Jones Reynolds did.

The Chinese know from experience what excessive leveling can do to a society. And they're cheering us on. That's why the chair tag states:

—Do not use cupholder for hot drinks.

So I tossed away the $5.50 take-out caffeinated beverage from the one American corporation still capable of challenging Chinese global economic hegemony. I was about to give up on America and have a beer even though it was ten in the morning. But first, I thought, there was a little essay to be written about that tag fluttering between my legs. I jerked on it. There was a ripping noise. The chair fabric gave way under my body mass index as I tumbled over, whacking my head on the somewhat unlevel ground of my patio while the deck chair folded up, painfully trapping my fingers.

Later, I confess, I stood on this product with a vengeance.

P. J. O'Rourke

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

Weak Horses

On Tuesday, July 18, in Tehran, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke to his countrymen. He reminded them of the connection between Israel and the liberal West: "The final point of liberal civilization is the false and corrupt state that has occupied Jerusalem. That is the bottom line. That is what all those who talk about liberalism and support it have in common." He went on to explain that when the Muslim world erupts, "its waves will not be limited to this region." That same day, Gholam Ali Hadad-Adel, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, issued a warning to the Zionists who had intruded into the Muslim Middle East: "Today, the land of Palestine is painted red with your contemptible blood. . . . No place in Israel will be safe."

Meanwhile, on that same summer day, the *Washington Post* appeared as usual on the doorsteps of most residents of Washington, D.C., the capital of the liberal civilization Ahmadinejad so dislikes. Its editorial page featured three of its distinguished columnists.

Two were liberals. One, E.J. Dionne, was worried—very, very worried. He saw only "disaster" and "calamity" ahead in the Middle East, no silver lining to the "frightening" developments taking place. He judged that "alarmism is the highest form of realism in this case"—and called for "at least a brief cease-fire." The other, Richard Cohen, was less alarmed, more philosophical. Cohen concurred in part with Ahmadinejad, judging that "Israel itself is a mistake." He dissented in part from Ahmadinejad because Cohen allowed that Israel is, after all, "an honest mistake, a well-intentioned mistake, a mistake for which no one is culpable." So Israel should not be destroyed. But neither should Israel, when it is attacked, go on the offensive. It should "hunker down."

The other regular columnist was a conservative, George F. Will. Will felt it important to remind his readers of the conservative truth of "the limits of power to subdue an unruly world." He mocked the possibility of military action against Syria or Iran. In passing, he cast an ironic eye—perhaps a disapproving one—on the fact that, while Israel has patiently borne the "torment" of terrorism "for decades," the United States "responded to two hours of terrorism one September morning by toppling two regimes halfway around the world with wars that show no signs of ending." (If the 9/11 attacks had lasted a little longer, would one's fine sense of proportion be less disturbed by the vigor of the American response?) In any case, Will concluded, things could get worse.

That's a lot of "weak horses," to borrow an Osama bin Laden formulation, for one op-ed page. Fortunately, there are at least a few strong horses in the nation's capital as well. One was to be found on the *Post*'s own editorial page, right across from Dionne and Cohen and Will. The clear-eyed liberalism of the *Post*'s own editorial, "A War With Extremists," was bracing, as the editors argued that "this Middle East conflict should end with the defeat of its instigators," Hamas and Hezbollah, and warned against accepting a premature cease-fire or any result other than a "decisive defeat" for the terrorists and their state backers in Damascus and Tehran.

The right policy is to stand behind Israel, and to support that nation in defeating terror—for its own sake, and on behalf of liberal civilization.

And on the news pages were reports of a couple more strong horses—George W. Bush and Tony Blair. Bush and Blair were, famously, caught on an open mike at the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg. Blair demonstrated a shrewd understanding of what was at stake for Syria's dictator, Bashar al-Assad: "He thinks if Lebanon turns out fine, if we get a solution in Israel and Palestine, Iraq goes in the right way . . . he's done." And Bush explained, simply and correctly, that the first step was "to get Hezbollah to stop doing this s—."

Israel is fighting to stop, and defeat, Hezbollah. Bush, Blair, and the *Post* editors understand that the right policy is to stand behind Israel, and to support that nation in defeating terror—for its own sake, and on behalf of liberal civilization. They understand that we are at war with an axis of jihadist-terrorist organizations and the states that sponsor them. They understand that we need to win the war. With Bush's leadership, we have a good chance to do so.

—*William Kristol*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letting Israel Be Israel

Bush's consistent approach to war and peace in the Middle East. BY FRED BARNES

No one should have been surprised by President Bush's let-Israel-fight policy in the current Middle East conflict. Bush is consistent. The essentials of his approach to Israel and its enemies were adopted four years ago when the president ostracized then-Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and called for democracy and reform in the Arab countries. Bush's policy is pro-Israel in that it is based on his belief that Israel wants peace with its neighbors, but some of them don't want peace with Israel. So Israel stands on higher moral ground.

The reaction when the policy was unveiled in June 2002 was the same as it is today. The foreign policy establishment was upset, even aghast. And almost all of Bush's allies in the G8 group of industrial democracies were disapproving.

Today, the major issue is a cease-fire. The establishment and the Europeans want one, and at least for now Bush doesn't. Why not? A cease-fire would preserve the status quo ante, the situation before the war between Israel and Hezbollah. That would mean Hezbollah, armed with thousands of missiles, would still be deployed along Israel's northern border. Not only would Israel's security remain in jeopardy, but the fragile democracy in Lebanon would continue to be compromised by Hezbollah's presence.

Bush doesn't want that. He wants the circumstances to be changed. The president prefers to give Israel time to "degrade"—the administration's verb of choice—Hezbollah's military capability and emasculate the terrorist organization as a political force. For that to occur, Israel must continue to pound Hezbollah with air power and perhaps mount a ground attack.

Four years ago, Bush said Israel has "a right to security" and a "right to defend itself from terror." This extended to tactics he didn't discuss in public.

The president's goal is a new Middle East. "True reform," he said in 2002, "will require entirely new political and economic institutions, based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism." Then, he was referring specifically to reform of the Palestinian Authority. Now, he'd like to apply those principles to the entire Middle East. Bush's only qualm about Israel's military offensive is that it might destabilize Lebanon's democratic government. Otherwise, he's happy for Israel to stay on the attack.

Bush also takes a broad view of Israel's right to defend itself aggressively. Four years ago, Bush said Israel has "a right to security" and a "right to defend itself from terror." This extended to tactics he didn't discuss in public. One was to permit Israel to assassinate terrorist leaders in the Palestinian territories without reprimands from the White House or State Department. Now, Bush says he won't make military decisions for Israel.

Since Israel responded to twin incursions and kidnappings of Israeli soldiers by Hamas and Hezbollah, Bush has been hounded by critics for not being "engaged" in recent years in diplomacy and peace negotiations in the Middle East. Had he been, hostilities might have been averted. In other words, his critics insist, the outbreak of war is Bush's fault, partly anyway. This is nonsense.

In the Middle East, calls for American engagement have always been a euphemism for pressuring Israel to make concessions. And engagement has often been accompanied by unproductive shuttle diplomacy by the secretary of state from one Middle East capital to another, a practice made famous by Henry Kissinger in the 1970s.

Bush has rejected shuttle diplomacy. He made that clear in 2002.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

Advertising Sales

Peter Dunn, *Associate Publisher, pdunn@weeklystandard.com 202-496-3334*

Nicholas H.B. Swezey, *Advertising & Marketing Manager; nswezey@weeklystandard.com 202-496-3355*
Robert Dodd, *Canada Advertising Manager bob@weeklystandard.com 905-885-0664*
Patrick Doyle, *West Coast Advertising Manager pdoyle@weeklystandard.com 415-777-4383*
Don Eugenio, *Midwest Advertising Manager deugenio@weeklystandard.com 312-953-7236*
Alexander Bruring, *Foreign Country Reports A.bruring@worldreportmedia.com 011-31-20-470-9238*
Meghan Hawthorne, *Account Executive and online sales mhawthorne@weeklystandard.com 202-496-3350*

For more information, visit ***weeklystandard.com****, click on the* ***About Us*** *button at the top, and select* ***Advertise****.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

More important, the president concluded that Israel would never reach a settlement with a terrorist state or organization and thus diplomacy aimed at achieving such a settlement was a nonstarter.

Kofi Annan, the United Nations secretary general, advocated exactly that sort of diplomacy last week when he called for a cease-fire that would lead to negotiations and a "lasting peace." Bush demurred, and for good reason. He doesn't believe in negotiating agreements between what an aide called "irreconcilables." And Israel and Hezbollah are irreconcilable, as are Israel and Hamas and Israel and Syria. So such agreements never work. Israel's enemies routinely violate them.

What would work, in Bush's view, is the implementation of U.N. Resolution 1559. It would require the disarming and dismantling of Hezbollah, a step that would provide Israel with security and the Lebanese government with freedom to act without the approval of Hezbollah, a group beholden to a foreign power, Iran. Annan didn't mention the resolution in his plea for a cease-fire.

When the president met last week with his G8 allies in St. Petersburg, Russia, he persuaded them to forgo a demand for an unconditional cease-fire. Instead, the "Statement by Group of Eight Leaders" issued on July 16 called for "utmost restraint" by Israel and said "the most urgent priority is to create the conditions for a cessation of violence."

By the end of the week, most of the Europeans thought those conditions had been created. Bush didn't. He was willing to send Condoleezza Rice, his secretary of state, for a day or so to the Middle East, but not to lean on Israel to halt its offensive.

That moment may come, just not yet. The Bush administration is different, an aide says, in explaining why Bush is the only president to have given Israel a free hand for so long. The difference is Bush believes terrorists and their sponsors must be resisted, not invited to negotiate. And, on this, Bush is very consistent. ♦

Let's You and Him Fight

The Syrians cheer on Hezbollah.

BY LEE SMITH

Damascus

THIS CITY USED to be so bounteous and verdant that, according to tradition, when the prophet Muhammad looked down upon it from the heights of Mt. Qassioun, he refused to come into Damascus, for one could enter paradise only once. Now one of the world's oldest cities is ripe with yellow Hezbollah flags. Posters of Hezbollah's General Secretary Hassan Nasrallah are hanging even along the narrow alleyways of the Christian Quarter in the Old City, but then again, supporting the Shiite terrorists in south Lebanon costs the Syrian people about as much as it costs their government—so far, absolutely nothing.

On the way to Damascus from Beirut, my Syrian driver Ali had several pictures of Nasrallah taped to the inside of the car. Ali is a Shiite, but he's not part of the Lebanese community that is paying a steep price for the conflict its leadership touched off when Hezbollah abducted two Israeli soldiers and killed eight more two weeks ago. Ali's most pressing concern here in Syria is not Lebanon or even Israel, but Sunni extremists, whom he fears and despises for their regional campaign against Shiites. Like many Shiites, Ali celebrated when Zarqawi, the Sunni leader of the al Qaeda insurgency in Iraq, was killed.

It is true that Nasrallah, a Shiite hero, is responsible for a sum total of death and destruction rapidly approaching what Zarqawi, the Shiite nemesis, inflicted on this Middle Eastern minority. But that is not a calculation most ordinary Shiites are ever likely to make. Shiites are supposed to suffer, and some of the greatest figures in their history, like Ali and Hussein, led disastrous military campaigns; Hussein's martyrdom at the battle of Karbala is still celebrated today during the Ashura festival. Why some members of Israel's leadership apparently believe that the Shiites will eventually turn on Nasrallah for his miscalculated campaign is a mystery almost as great as the occlusion of the twelfth imam.

On one level, my driver Ali's affection for Hezbollah is sectarian—it is the organization that has let Shiites across the Middle East hold their heads high, higher even than Sunnis, since Hezbollah has been willing to fight Israel at the drop of a hat. And yet, on another level, people like Ali, including Syrian Christians and other Arabs throughout the Middle East, love Nasrallah for more purely political reasons. That is, anyone who stands up to Israel or the West is a "resistance" fighter. One of the more interesting, and telling, features of Arab politics is that figures like Nasrallah and Zarqawi, divided by sectarian enmity, are both still regarded as heroic "resistance" figures—so long as they are fighting Israel or the West.

I'm sitting in a Damascus restaurant with Dalia, a 25-year-old television producer who loves the resistance—all resistance. "If you think that the U.S. or anyone can offer the Syrian government a deal to abandon its support for Nasrallah and Khaled Meshal, you are crazy, because all Syrians support the resistance. They are fighting Israel."

Lee Smith, a Hudson Institute visiting fellow based in Beirut, is writing a book on Arab culture.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AFP / Louai Beshara

Pro-Hezbollah Syrians in Damascus, July 21

Dalia seems surprised or embarrassed when I point out that at least two-thirds of Lebanon do not like the resistance at all right now and are furious with Nasrallah for bringing destruction to their country. Why, I ask her, are Syrians cheering on a fight that so many Lebanese never wanted? She changes the subject. "Today I went to the camps where Lebanese refugees are arriving, and I was proud that even wealthy Syrians have been going down to help." In other words, Lebanese suffering is an opportunity for Syrian munificence.

In the year and a half since the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from their country, the Lebanese political class and ordinary citizens alike have pointedly ignored their country's problems, including corruption and likely complicity in Syria's plot to kill Hariri. They lay blame for everything at the feet of their next-door neighbors. There are many Lebanese who hate not just Bashar Assad's regime, but ordinary Syrians as well.

And here in Damascus on a Thursday night, where young Syrians are packed together in their expensive cars, flying their yellow Hezbollah flags, blasting resistance music, and shouting martial slogans to other passersby who shout back in loud agreement, it is clear that the regime and the people are in perfect sync. Bashar Assad, along with the Islamic Republic of Iran, is one of Hezbollah's masters, and now all of Lebanon is dancing to the tune of "resistance" that the Syrian people require of their neighbors. Let all of Lebanon bleed if it must, someone else is taking on the Jews and we here, proud to live in one of the oldest cities in the world, are safe and happy, as if it were a Syrian national holiday.

But why exactly are Arabs so enamored of resistance? The word in Arabic is *muqawama*, and as in English the idea indicates reaction, and thus suggests an original grievance that inspired resistance. In the 20th century the Ottoman Empire, then the West, and later Israel, was the Arab world's first cause and prime mover. There was resistance long before Nasrallah and Hamas and all the earlier Palestinian groups, and even before Nasser; in fact, at least as far back as 1928, when Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood, there was resistance.

And it is not just fighting. It is the touchstone of Arab political discourse with the outside world. (There is no political discourse among Arabs themselves, because it is too dangerous.) Of course, resistance is extremist discourse, and it is insatiable; it is a struggle against something that seems to threaten life itself, and so the only solution is to obliterate the other. Hence, it is very difficult to imagine what comes after resistance. Maybe there is peace when there is no one left who has to be accommodated.

Dalia told me that she had recently met Meshal—the Hamas leader who hides from Israel in Damascus—and she was impressed but saw no way that he could implement his plan to get rid of Israel. Dalia is 100 percent with the program, but prefers Nasrallah, because he seems more pragmatic. It is strange to look in the eyes of an attractive young woman and find her intense with the same bitter calculations that motivate the Meshals and Nasrallahs.

"The Roman empire did not last forever," Dalia said. "There is no reason to believe that Israel will. It should have never existed to begin with, and all Arabs believe that it will be wiped out."

I pointed out that eliminationism is a very risky gambit. If your politics are geared toward destroying another, then it is possible they will eliminate you first. The Syrian people are so giddy with resistance and so removed from the rest of the world, never mind the war in Lebanon, that they do not seem to recognize the possible consequences of the awful pact that their resistance-minded government has signed them up for. If Hezbollah is fighting for Syria and Iran, why are they so sure they won't end up themselves fighting for Hezbollah—or for Iran? In Syria at least it seems resistance is something the other guy does for you. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Sodano Code

The Vatican's stale policy on the Middle East.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

FOR MORE THAN TWENTY years, Pope John Paul II showed a way to work for the defeat of totalitarianism. It was not by armies, although it relied on the threat of American power to keep the dictators from military adventures. And it was not by appeasement, although it knew how to practice patience when it had to. At its deepest, the pope's vision required simply that we refuse government by the lie, that we name and know things for what they are, and his Catholic call for democratic reform seemed to have effect everywhere, from Paraguay to Poland.

Everywhere, that is, except the Middle East, where from Algeria to Afghanistan dictatorships flourished during his pontificate. But the problem may not be that John Paul II's method failed there. The problem may be that it was never tried—not even by John Paul II.

Since the founding of Israel in 1948, the Vatican has never had a clear idea how to respond to tensions in the area. Too much seemed to swirl out of control. There were questions of how best to protect the various ancient Catholic populations, delicate relations with the Orthodox churches, and complex disputes about ownership of the holy places in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Galilee. And tinting everything was the rising Arab-Israeli conflict. For the Roman diplomats, the disproportion was obvious: Supporting Israel risked the murder of Christians in Islamic countries; supporting the Arabs risked a stern note from the Israeli ambassador.

Cardinal Sodano and Pope Benedict

AP Photo / l'Osservatore Romano

The Vatican was never anti-Israeli, and it certainly never condoned or praised terrorism. But, bit by bit, Rome's advisers and experts on the Middle East came to be those whose first impulse was to take the Arab, and particularly the Palestinian, side in any dispute with Israel or the United States. Relations were formed with Islamic and Baathist governments, and as the Christian communities of the Middle East weakened—their decline over the last 50 years has been precipitous—protecting the little that remained came to seem even more important.

Meanwhile, a kind of functional pacifism gradually took hold among Roman theologians, as the traditional canons of Catholic just-war theory were ratcheted up to a standard impossible for any military action to meet. And layered on top of all this was the hunger of the foreign-policy bureaucrats in Rome to be like government advisers everywhere else in Europe: So many other things—especially homosexuality and abortion—separated them from their secular counterparts, they were grateful for a topic on which they could share elite European opinion.

The nadir may have come in February 2003, during the agitation before the invasion of Iraq, when Tariq Aziz, Saddam Hussein's deputy prime minister, was brought to Italy to be feted at St. Francis's church in Assisi and treated to an audience with John Paul II in Rome. But you can see the same impulse in the Vatican's current secretary of state, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who announced on Vatican Radio last week: "As it has done in the past, the Holy See condemns the terrorist attacks of one side as well as the military reprisals of the other. In fact, the right to defense of a state is not exempt from respect for the norms of international law, especially as regards the safeguarding of civilian populations. In particular, the Holy See now deplores the attack on Lebanon, a free and sovereign nation."

The moral equivalence between terrorism and the response to terrorism was troubling—and, indeed, Sodano was indulging in *more* than moral equivalence, for he singled out the Israelis for blame "in particular." The problem Israel faces is precisely that Lebanon is not "a free and sovereign nation," but a weak and captive

Joseph Bottum, a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is editor of* First Things.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nation, unable to assert its sovereignty over areas dominated by a terrorist organization.

Meanwhile, the Italian press trumpeted, as a denunciation of Israel, Pope Benedict's request that the Carmelite nuns he was visiting "also pray for the terrorists because they don't know that they are doing evil not only to their neighbor but to themselves as well"—though that is, in fact, sound Christian theology, and it names the terrorists precisely as *terrorists*, who must turn away from violence. But when Benedict later announced "neither terrorist acts nor reprisals can be justified," he appeared to be back in the territory of Cardinal Sodano.

Of course, in one sense, Sodano was merely indulging the kind of ritual statement—everybody's wrong, but Israel most of all—that the Vatican has been issuing for decades. It didn't mean much in 1973, and it doesn't mean much now.

In another sense, however, Sodano's remarks on Vatican Radio—and similar statements by other Catholic figures, from the custodians of the holy places in Israel to the editorialists in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*—are most disturbing precisely because of their datedness. The situation in the Middle East is no longer simply a battle between Israelis and Palestinians. With the increasing role of the Iranians, and the refusal of the Arab League to involve itself, the fight doesn't even really center around the Arabs.

It is, rather, a war between the Islamists and the West—a proxy fight, in which the totalitarian governments of Syria and Iran have aimed the weapon of terrorism at modern democracies. And, for the Catholic Church, the answer cannot remain the old, ritual statements about the Middle East, dusted off one more time. John Paul II had a vision for confronting totalitarianism—a way of refusing government by the lie and naming things for what they are. It is time for the Vatican to apply that vision to the Middle East. ♦

When Will They Ever Learn . . .

Why do so many American Jews hate the president who stands by Israel?

BY DAVID GELERNTER

FOR YEARS I have watched the Palestinians do absurdly self-destructive things, and have never understood them until now. But watching the Bush administration stoutly defend Israel this week against the background of an American Jewish population that vocally (often sneeringly) dislikes him and his administration, and consistently votes by massive majorities for his Democratic opponents, I start to understand the Palestinians just a little.

American Jews are not Palestinians and have not sunk to the level of supporting terrorist murderers. But their behavior is a lesson in self-destructive nihilism that could teach even the Palestinians a thing or two. U.S. Jews remain fervent supporters of an American left that is increasingly unable or unwilling to say why Israel must exist. Of course American Jews, like all Americans, define their interests in terms of many issues and not just one. But there is a reason why so many used to put Israel's safety near the top of their lists: Israel has been caught in a life-or-death struggle since birth; American support is critical to her survival.

True: Jewish support for President Bush moved upward in the 2004 election relative to the 2000 figures. It moved all the way up to 25 percent. During the five presidential elections of the 1970s and '80s, American Jews averaged 35 percent support for the Republican candidate, so 25 percent for Bush in '04 was not exactly a landslide move to the GOP. But even this pint-sized move seems to have petered out earlier this year. Jack Abramoff does not make an attractive spokesman for Jewish Republicans. The fall of Tom DeLay silenced one of the best friends Israel ever had in American politics, and one of the most effective symbols of Republican support for Israel. So the pattern of the '90s is likely to continue: American Jews move left as the left moves away from Israel.

Merely look at American universities and their disastrous left-wing tilt (many are close to capsizing), and check out recent studies that document a startling deterioration in knowledge of and sympathy for Israel on U.S. college campuses, and you will learn plenty about the American left and its increasingly anti-Israel tendencies.

When you vote for a presidential candidate, you are voting to award jobs to a few of his supporters, and influence to vast numbers of them. Most Democratic politicians speak up for Israel. But grassroots Democrats are increasingly dangerous to the Jewish state (not to mention the American state). Still, American Jews vote for (and bankroll!) Democrats. And each time they repeat this performance, the risk is greater.

Will they risk it again in 2008? Will the Arabs force Israel into yet another round of catastrophic, self-destructive bloodletting after this round is over? In both cases, probably yes.

American Jews (especially the

David Gelernter, a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is a national fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intellectual leadership) have a tragic history of acting against their own professed interests. In the years before Pearl Harbor, U.S. intellectuals on the whole (especially New York intellectuals) vehemently opposed American entry alongside Britain into the war against Nazi Germany. Of course many New York intellectuals were not Jews, and many American Jews didn't care for New York intellectuals. But journals like *Partisan Review* helped shape the cultural climate—and were fiercely antiwar until Pearl Harbor—and were shaped, themselves, by Jewish intellectuals. Leading Jewish intellectuals signed a *Partisan Review* statement explaining that "Our entry into the war, under the slogan of 'Stop Hitler!' would actually result in the immediate introduction of totalitarianism over here. . . . The American masses can best help [the German people] by fighting *at home* to keep their own liberties."

Before Pearl Harbor, many prominent (non-intellectual) U.S. Jews failed to support war against Hitler because they were scared—understandably if unforgivably. Anti-Semitism was still real in this country, Jewish influence in America was brand new, and Jews did not want to be blamed for involving their country in another world war. Which makes the case of *Partisan Review* and other intellectual organs so fascinating. In some respects, left-wing Jewish intellectuals were admirably fearless. Most were Marxists and didn't give a damn what the country thought of them. Nonetheless: The *Partisan Review* crowd did *not* speak up for war against Hitler. Just the opposite.

Read that ancient *Partisan Review* statement and the truth hits home. The problem with the American Jewish left, from 1940 through 2006, is not malevolence but naiveté—naiveté so great, it is the next best thing to stupidity. Naiveté is an occupational hazard among all intellectuals. But American Jews at large respect their intellectuals as much as any group does, and more than most—and way too much for common sense.

The Palestinian Arabs who cheer terrorists on do so out of hate, which is far stronger than intelligent self-interest (or any other emotion). American Jews used to act out of very different motives; used to vote left out of idealism. But that is starting to change. As the left-wing agenda dries up, nothing remains to feed on (if you are used to getting your nourishment left of center) but the bitter weeds of hate. And thus the tragic, pathetic surge of hatred for George Bush on the left, including among left-wing Jews. As I heard someone say last week, "I think Bush is doing great on Israel. Naturally, I still hate his guts."

The problem with the American Jewish left, from 1940 through 2006, is not malevolence but naiveté—naiveté so great, it is the next best thing to stupidity.

For those who continue to insist on voting Democratic, the future is written in a recent column by Richard Cohen—who explains that the "greatest mistake Israel could make at the moment is to forget that Israel itself is a mistake." Who advises Israel to "hunker down," while "waiting (and hoping) that history will get distracted and move on to something else." It is hard to understand why Israel is a mistake if Switzerland isn't—or the United States, or any other nation or (for that matter) human being. Cohen himself is occupying space right now that someone else could be using, and maybe wants to. The earth's surface did not expand to make room for him. Births have outstripped deaths on this planet for many generations. But we are not in the habit of demanding that human beings justify their existence or be mowed down, and the idea is equally bad in the case of nations.

Life is valuable in itself—human life or the life of nations; one of the main differences being that it is so much harder to create a nation. That the Israelis have done so—have created in fact a free nation and a hugely productive one that treats all its citizens humanely and is a world center of science, medicine, scholarship, and argument (all flavors)—is one of the stunning facts of modern history.

And, of course, the origins of no two nations more resemble each other than Israel's and America's, both created by Europeans clutching Bibles, searching for freedom, prepared to fight for a room of their own. Both populated by human beings, a species not noted for perfection. Yet both strongholds of democracy, freedom, and tolerance nonetheless. Anyone who has decided that Israel is a mistake is likely to come around to the same view of the United States.

But let's consider Cohen's offensive question anyway. Imagine how Jews might have fared in the Middle East over the last half century with no Jewish state to protect them. Would they have done as well as the Syrians, Egyptians, Libyans? Or would they all be dead, along with countless other victims of mass-murdering Arab tyrants? Or should the Middle East have been "restricted," like tony New York clubs in the 1930s—no Jews allowed? And Europe doesn't like Jews any better than the Middle East does; should Europe be restricted too? And what about America?

But Jews no longer have to ask such questions. Cohen may not be so sure that Jews have the same rights as other nations, but thanks to Israel's existence the question is closed and his view no longer matters. One thing is certain: Palestinians and left-wing American Jews would understand each other beautifully if they ever got together for a conference on refusing to face reality. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hezbollah's Arsenal

It's more lethal than everyone thought.

BY DAN DARLING

AP Photo / Mohammed Zatari

Hezbollah training with Katyusha rockets, January 9, 2000

As the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah continues to escalate in Lebanon, one of the most alarming discoveries since the beginning of the fighting has been the variety, as well as the capabilities, of the weaponry employed by Hezbollah.

Under the apt headline "Arming of Hezbollah Reveals U.S. and Israeli Blind Spots," the *New York Times* recently provided a sense of just how powerful Hezbollah has become since the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. As the *Times* explained, "the power and sophistication of the missile and rocket arsenal that Hezbollah has used in recent days has caught the United States and Israel off guard . . . both countries are just now learning the extent to which the militant group has succeeded in getting weapons from Iran and Syria."

There is good reason to be concerned. Since the fighting began, Hezbollah has inflicted more damage on Israel than Saddam Hussein's Iraq was able to inflict on Kuwait during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Hezbollah has deployed a range of extremely sophisticated weapons against Israel. The most notable has been the Iranian C-802 Noor (Tondar) variant of the Chinese Silkworm missile that was used against an Israeli gunship off the Lebanese coast. Four Israeli sailors were killed, and the gunship was put out of commission.

The Associated Press reports that "Iran is believed to have supplied Hezbollah with up to 120 Fajr-3 and Fajr-5 rockets, with ranges of 22 miles and 45 miles respectively," noting that it was a Fajr-3 that is thought to have been responsible for an attack on Haifa that killed 8 civilians. More recently, Israeli military officials have sought to destroy sites in Lebanon believed to house long-range Zelzal missiles of Iranian manufacture that they suspect are capable of hitting Tel Aviv. And while early reports that an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) was responsible for the attack on the Israeli warship were inaccurate, Hezbollah is still assumed to possess several UAVs.

Nor is Iran Hezbollah's only source of weaponry. The *New York Times* quoted anonymous officials as saying that "some of the rockets in Hezbollah's arsenal—including a 220-millimeter rocket used in a deadly attack on a railway site in Haifa on Sunday—were built in Syria. . . . Officials have since confirmed that the warhead on the Syrian rocket was filled with ball bearings—a method of destruction used frequently in suicide bombings but not in warhead technology." An intelligence official was quoted in the article as saying, "We've never seen anything like this."

Given the apparent intelligence failure surrounding both Hezbollah's acquisition of this advanced weaponry and the willingness of Iran and Syria to supply it, the question whether the capabilities displayed to date by Hezbollah represent the full extent and scope of its arsenal may be worth raising.

Moreover, even the group's more mundane weapons have undergone numerous improvements. The *Times* reports that U.S. and Israeli intelligence were "surprised by the advances that Hezbollah had made in improv-

Dan Darling is a counterterrorism consultant.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing what had been crude rockets—for example, attaching cluster bombs as warheads, or filling an explosive shell with ball bearings that have devastating effect." While some of these advances have come about through experience and murderous innovation, it is undeniable that Hezbollah would not be able to threaten Israel to the degree that it does without the full and active support of Syria and Iran. Clearly, contrary to the prognostications of many, state sponsorship still plays a major role in the amount of force that a terrorist group like Hezbollah can bring to bear against Israel. This is particularly true if, as *Time* magazine reported on its website in June, Hezbollah's long-range weapons are "under the direct command of officers of Iran's Revolutionary Guards," the elite branch of the Iranian military. According to the *New York Times*'s unnamed intelligence sources, Revolutionary Guards probably "trained Hezbollah fighters on how to successfully fire and guide the missiles."

Given the sophistication and variety of Hezbollah's weapons and the role of Syria and Iran in supplying them, any lasting solution to the situation in Lebanon must involve the full disarmament or destruction of Hezbollah's arsenal, with a firm understanding that it will not be reconstituted.

The *Times* reported that the administration was reluctant to detail the role of Iran because of "a desire by the Bush administration to contain the conflict to Israeli and Hezbollah forces, and not to enlarge the diplomatic tasks by making Iranian missile supplies, or even those of Syria, a central question for now." While such reticence may make good diplomatic sense in the short term, no agreement that fails to address these issues will last.

The point is not to make Iranian missile supplies to Hezbollah central to our diplomacy—it is to prevent "the A-Team of Terrorists" from continuing to possess such weapons. If Hezbollah is allowed to retain its arsenal in return for a cease-fire, what guarantee is there that it will refrain from using them again? ♦

Europe Meets Israel

What a week for a journalists' junket.

BY JEFFREY GEDMIN

Prime Minister Zapatero

AP Photo / EFE / Morell

Tel Aviv

A week ago I arrived here, and already the atmosphere was a bit surreal. I would sit outside in a beachfront restaurant, enjoying a warm summer breeze, music, and delicious grilled fish, as scores of young people walked the boardwalk. You felt that this half of the country at least was at peace. Tel Aviv's large white-sand beach was packed by day. But in the evening it was hard not to notice the military planes that passed overhead every few minutes on their way north. Israel was surely at war.

I'm here cohosting a group of European journalists, writers, and broadcasters from a half dozen different countries, all of whom are visiting Israel for the first time. Conventional wisdom early in our trip was that certain places in the north would be exempt from the violence. We had planned a trip to Tiberias, with a dinner on the Sea of Galilee. That was until we heard from Yaara, the manager of the Decks restaurant, who told us a rocket had hit nearby. Windows were damaged, she said, but "God would protect us" if we still wanted to come.

Self-preservation concentrates the mind and turns you into a defense geek. The Katyusha has a range of 12 to 15 miles. The Fajr-3 and the Fajr-5 can sail approximately 25 and 45 miles, respectively. When we arrived, my sources told me that Hezbollah might have a number of long-range Iranian missiles capable of reaching Tel Aviv. Within 48 hours, Israel had

Jeffrey Gedmin is director of the Aspen Institute Berlin and a member of the advisory board of Knowing Israel, a study tour program for journalists.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

destroyed an Iranian Zelzal rocket with a range of up to 200 km. That would have brought Tel Aviv into range. Since then the Israelis have destroyed another 19.

I cannot say I have felt entirely safe in Jerusalem. The Israelis caught a suicide bomber near the Jaffe Gate just before we arrived. There has been much talk about the other side opening a third front. With rockets streaming in from Gaza and Lebanon, there has been little reason to believe West Bank terrorists would stay out of the game. A day after we left Tel Aviv, another suicide bomber was nabbed north of the city. As I write, yet another suicide bomber is said to be on the loose in the same area. For our tour through the old city, we hired two security men to accompany our group.

In Jerusalem, the King David Hotel has become, once again, a center of backroom kibitzing in a time of crisis. *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman passes one way through the lobby; Israeli politician and former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, the other. E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana strolls down an adjacent hallway with former Mossad head Efraim Halevy. You have to wonder whether Halevy, a former ambassador to the E.U., can make any headway. In his recently published memoir, *Man in the Shadows*, Halevy says if you take European arguments to their logical conclusions, "then only the disappearance of the State of Israel would succeed in pacifying the insatiable desires of the Arab world." This may sound a touch extreme, but Solana lives up to the caricature. When asked by a television reporter whether the axis of Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah has been behind the current conflict, Solana replies by saying that he does "not want to mention names." In another interview, Solana is pushed in vain to admit that Hezbollah belongs on the E.U.'s terrorist list.

I think Gideon Samet, the prominent liberal-left columnist for *Haaretz*, shocked our group a little. Samet is not exactly a hard-liner. He has a healthy European-style dislike of the American president. He has argued for dialogue with Hamas. Now he tells these nice European journalists that the current Israeli operations in Lebanon constitute a "just war." This is difficult for the group to swallow. The European narrative seems to go like this: Hezbollah kidnaps two Israeli soldiers; Israel seeks revenge by bombing the hell out of Lebanon. There's nothing more to say.

As a result of this blinkered view, much of the media coverage has been deplorable. A doctor treating children at a hospital in the northern city of Safed could barely control his frustration. His hospital, which serves Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Bedouins, was hit by a Hezbollah rocket last week, and this "soften spoken gentleman," as one of my European colleagues put it, wants to know why the BBC is obsessed with legitimate Israeli action against Hezbollah. Europe's pols seem to be reading from the same script as its media. Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has lambasted Israel for using "abusive force that does not allow innocent human beings to defend themselves." After a public appearance in Spain last week, someone placed a Palestinian scarf around Zapatero's neck. The prime minister allowed himself to be photographed in it.

There can be no doubt that Hamas set the stage for all this. Israel withdrew from Gaza, and the Palestinians celebrated their independence in the ensuing months by sending some 600 rockets into Israel. Hamas then raised the ante by kidnapping an Israeli soldier. As a somewhat liberal writer friend here puts it, "If you keep poking a lion, sooner or later you're going to get swatted with a big paw." As for Hezbollah, before nabbing those two other Israeli soldiers, it had already begun firing its own rockets into Israel from southern Lebanon, a detail many European commentators overlook. What's more, the attacks began coincidentally at a moment when Iran was failing to respond to the rather magnanimous U.S.-E.U. proposal on Tehran's nuclear file. Dennis Ross, Bill Clinton's former envoy, sees a clear line to Iran. President Bush rightly names Syria, too. The E.U.'s Solana, however, is loath to mention names.

Israel and Europe can trade together wonderfully, but the dialogue about security is nearly hopeless. Israel wants to smash Hezbollah, a state within a state and a wholly owned Iranian subsidiary. Countries like Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, all aware of Iran's regional ambitions, don't seem to mind. Lebanon would surely be better off if the Israelis succeeded. But Europe wants an end to the conflict as soon as possible, regardless of the consequences. Some actually believe that a prisoner exchange—that was initially the Hamas and Hezbollah proposal—would end the "cycle of violence." The Israelis, goes the line, destroy families, imprison youths, and even hold young women in detention!

According to a recent study by Shabak, the Israeli FBI, Palestinians are responsible for 24,000 assaults on Israeli civilians since September 2000. One hundred and forty three suicide bombers, the majority between 17 and 24 years old, have killed 513 Israelis. As for Palestinian women under Israeli lock and key, I like the story of Achlam Tmimi. In her early twenties, she is serving 16 consecutive life sentences for helping a suicide bomber blow up a pizzeria, killing 16. She says she would do it again. I am also fond of the story of another infamous young woman who had made a date with an Israeli teenager on the Internet. Two days later his body was found riddled with bullets. Five years later, the young woman, Amneh Muna, is a hero for many in the West Bank. Poverty and despair account for all this? I guess I am skeptical. I am not entirely convinced that putting these folks back on the streets is really the best way to lasting peace and reconciliation. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What a Bleeping Shame

Hollywood wins a copyright victory.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST

THE CLEANFLICKS business model was relatively straightforward. When it launched in June 2000, the Utah-based movie-rental company would buy a popular film on DVD (or VHS tape, in the early days) and make a digital copy of it on a computer. They would then use video editing software to remove or obscure portions they deemed not suitable for family viewing. According to company literature, this meant excising nudity, graphic violence, sexual content, and bad language ("the B-words, H-word when not referring to the place, D-word, S-word, F-word, etc." and the "G-word and JC-words" when used in a non-religious context).

CleanFlicks would copy this edited version and rent (or sell) it to customers, either through a mail-in service or at a retail branch. CleanFlicks kept one purchased original DVD for every edited DVD they rented, and, when they sold an edited movie, they sold it bundled with the original. The editing process used state-of-the-art technology—a combination of redacting, blending, cropping, and fogging. By 2006, CleanFlicks boasted a library of more than 700 popular titles, some of which must have taken quite a bit of work to render family-friendly. On July 14, for example, the number one movie on CleanFlicks' Top Rentals list was the excellent 2005 raunch-fest *Wedding Crashers*.

Shortly after CleanFlicks opened for business, Hollywood came after it for copyright infringement. The Directors Guild of America, the eight major studios, and a cadre of 16 star directors (with 10 Oscars among them) filed suit against CleanFlicks and its competitors in the family video-editing market. And on July 6, after years of legal wrangling, Judge Richard P. Matsch of the Colorado District Court put the copiers all out of business. As a matter of law, the case did not set any new precedents, but it did open a window onto the soul of Hollywood.

Studios routinely sell edited versions of their movies (and edited in the same way CleanFlicks does) for broadcast on airplanes or television.

The law takes copyright seriously. It's one of the few rights actually enshrined in the Constitution. But, like every right, it is qualified, and CleanFlicks and its codefendants rested their case on three shaky claims.

First, CleanFlicks argued that they were making "fair use" of the movies because their edits constituted "criticism" of and "commentary" on the originals. (This is the exception to copyright that allows reviewers, for instance, to reproduce passages from a book under review without the permission of the author or publisher.) CleanFlicks and its codefendants, Judge Matsch observed, sought "to establish a public policy test that they are criticizing objectionable content commonly found in current movies and that they are providing more socially acceptable alternatives to enable families to view the films together."

But on this count, they had already been rebuffed by Congress, which, in the Family Movie Act passed in 2005, provided an explicit fair use exemption for people who wanted to edit movies in the privacy of their own homes. This right to create a "criticized" version of a movie was not, however, extended to commercial businesses.

The second defense was a contention that CleanFlicks' edited versions were "transformative," rather than "derivative," works. The 1994 case *Campbell* v. *Acuff-Rose Music* provided that "the more transformative the new work, the less will be the significance of other factors, like commercialism, that may weigh against a finding of fair use." (The transformative work allowed in that case was a 2 Live Crew rap parody of Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman.")

CleanFlicks argued that their edits transformed the movies, but that was a stretch. Transformation, *Campbell* explained, arises from a use that "adds something new, with a further purpose or different character, altering the first with new expression, meaning or message." As Judge Matsch noted, CleanFlicks sought not to add, but to delete. And as for altering the message of the movies, CleanFlicks promised not to do that, nor was that what its customers were looking for: As its website boasted, "You will not realize you have watched an edited movie except for the realization that it contained no offensive content."

The final defense was more moral than statutory. The defendants asked, with some bewilderment, why the Directors Guild and the studios would want to shut down their operation since, after all, they were helping them sell DVDs. Remember, CleanFlicks purchased a new copy of a DVD for every edited copy they created. And given their customers' interests, it seems reasonable to

Jonathan V. Last is online editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assume that these DVDs would not otherwise have been bought or rented. At a time when the costs of making movies are steadily increasing and box office receipts are gradually declining, you'd think the suits in Hollywood would be thrilled with an additional revenue stream.

Mind you, the Hollywood contention that the lawsuit was about creative control and artistic integrity didn't hold much water. After all, studios routinely sell significantly edited versions of their movies (and edited in the same way CleanFlicks does, to remove nudity, profanity, and gore) for broadcast on airplanes or television. Occasionally, even the foreign theatrical release of a movie will differ slightly from the U.S. version. In the age of mass-produced DVDs, it would technically be a trivial thing for the studios to release, say, the airline edit of a popular movie, just as they now release widescreen and non-widescreen format DVDs to serve customers with different kinds of televisions.

But Judge Matsch zeroed in on the real issue. "[T]he Studios do not compete in this alternative market," he wrote, referring to the world of conservative and religious families that patronized CleanFlicks and the other family-video editors. "[T]he infringing parties are exploiting a market for movies that is different from what the Studios have released into and for an audience the Studios have not sought to reach," he continued. "[I]t is a question of what audience the copyright owner wants to reach."

And so it is. It's one thing to show a cleaned-up version of *Wedding Crashers* for the enjoyment of passengers on a flight from Los Angeles to Paris; but for a family in Provo to be able to watch it together is another matter entirely. One of the conservative complaints about Hollywood has always been that it's a town where people will exploit anything for a dollar. But it seems that there are still limits: Catering to a religious audience is something the studios just won't do. ♦

A Man, a Plan, a Canal

What Nasser wrought when he seized Suez a half century ago. BY ARTHUR HERMAN

On July 26, 1956, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, at that time the most vital international waterway in the world. The Middle East, and all of us, still live under the shadow of the fateful events his decision triggered 50 years ago. Even more than the Cold War, the Suez crisis has shaped the world we live in. And at its heart was the biggest American foreign policy blunder since the War of 1812.

The socialist Proudhon said the origin of property was theft. The same could be said of the modern Middle East. By any objective standard, Nasser's seizing of the canal was theft. Until that July, it had been administered by a private company headquartered in Paris and owned by international shareholders. Nasser had even signed an agreement recognizing the Canal Zone's autonomy two years earlier, which allowed Great Britain to pull out the last troops from its bases in Suez.

That withdrawal, of course, freed the Egyptian dictator to do what he pleased. Nasser decided to grab the canal to pay for his ill-conceived dam on the Nile at Aswan. He also reasoned that the resulting international outcry would only build up his reputation in the Arab world, and that the response from a declining British Empire, and the rest of the West, would be all talk and no action—even though Suez was vital to Britain and Europe for their oil from the Persian Gulf.

Arthur Herman is the author, most recently, of To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World *(Harper Collins/Perennial).*

This was Nasser's one miscalculation—but in the end it proved unimportant. In 1956, memories of Hitler and Mussolini were still fresh. Appeasing demagogic dictators who broke international law had few advocates. Just three years earlier, Iran's Mossadegh had tried to nationalize Iran's oil wells. The British and the CIA had kicked him out of power for his pains.

Britain's prime minister, Anthony Eden, assumed he had to respond to Nasser's move with some show of force, especially if he wanted to lay claim to being Winston Churchill's political heir. He also saw an opportunity to reassert Britain's authority on the world stage after the loss of India. But ,unlike Churchill, Eden had no understanding of history; he had, in historian Paul Johnson's words, "a fatal propensity to confuse the relative importance of events." He also never understood, as Churchill had, that to use military force, one had to be ready to use it to the hilt.

So, when the British high command informed Eden it would take six weeks to assemble enough ships, planes, and men to take back the canal and topple Nasser, Eden turned to the French for help. They in turn appealed to the Israelis. For some time the Israelis had wanted to wipe out the Palestinian guerrilla bases which had sprung up along their border with Egypt since the 1948 war, camps run by a Palestinian student-turned-Nasser flunky named Yasser Arafat. So Israel's chief of staff, the 41-year-old Moshe Dayan, drew up a plan with the help of a young paratrooper colonel named Ariel Sharon for an incursion into Gaza and Sinai

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in coordination with an Anglo-French landing at Suez. The Israelis assumed the West would back up bold action against hit-and-run terrorists and those who supported them.

But they, and their allies the French and British, had not reckoned on the United States. President Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, were preoccupied with the Cold War. Like their Democratic predecessors, they were reluctant to support any move that smacked of "colonialism," no matter how justified. And Eisenhower, in Stephen Ambrose's words, was "uncomfortable with Jews" and never understood the threat Israel faced from its Arab neighbors. So the Americans refused to endorse the Suez invasion. "We do not want to meet violence with violence," Dulles said—words that have a disturbing echo today. Then the Americans went further. If the British and French attacked Egypt, Eden was told, the United States would not back them up in the United Nations.

Finally, in late October, after weeks of hesitation and prevaricating, the British, French, and Israelis struck. The British and French Operation Musketeer was a stunning success; in the face of the Israeli attack, Nasser's army collapsed. French paratroopers and tanks were poised to roll into Cairo. But then, with American encouragement, U.N. secretary general Dag Hammarskjöld became involved.

To this day in elite circles, his name is treated with pious reverence second only to Gandhi and Martin Luther King. After his death, his face even graced an American postage stamp. In fact, Hammarskjöld was arguably the worst secretary general in the history of the United Nations. He was certainly the most devious. He was the bleak prototype of another U.N. *apparatchik*, his fellow Swede Hans Blix. Smug, icily cerebral, essentially humorless, he possessed a smooth arrogance that concealed a bottomless pit of liberal guilt.

Suez was the making of him. From the start, Hammarskjöld steered the U.N. debate away from the question of how to deal with a lawless dictator, making it an open forum for denouncing "Western imperialism." The loudest voices came from the Russians and their Communist allies, who made Israel their particular target (even as Russian troops were crushing the revolt in Hungary). Nasser became the new hero of the "nonaligned nations," the Fifties code phrase for the new countries in Asia and Africa who were ready to play one Cold War superpower against the other. According to at least one insider, although Hammarskjöld personally despised Nasser, he deferred to Nasser's ambassador "on all points and at all stages" in arranging a final cease-fire and calling for a British, French, and Israeli withdrawal.

President Nasser

Bettmann / Corbis

To Hammarskjöld, the issue was simple. If you were European and white, you were always in the wrong. If you were nonwhite, you were a victim of something and *ipso facto* in the right. Even so, Hammarskjöld's U.N. resolutions would have remained so many scraps of papers had President Eisenhower not threatened to break the pound sterling on the world's financial markets. Eden's will to fight burst like a soap bubble. French and British troops began pulling out in March 1957. Nasser triumphantly claimed his canal; Israel withdrew from Gaza and the Sinai.

The Suez crisis was over. But the damage it did was, and remains, incalculable. Eisenhower had wrecked the trust between the United States and its former World War II allies for a generation; in the case of France, for all time. If anyone wonders why French politicians are always willing to undermine American initiatives around the world, the answer is summed up in one word: "Suez."

Suez destroyed the United Nations as well. By handing it over to Dag Hammarskjöld and his feckless ilk, Eisenhower turned the organization from the stout voice of international law and order into at best a meaningless charade; at worst, a Machiavellian cesspool. Instead of teaching Nasser and his fellow dictators that breaking international law does not pay, Suez taught them that every transgression will be forgotten and forgiven, especially if oil is at stake.

As for Nasser, Israel moved to the top of his agenda. Attacking the Jewish state became the recognized path to leadership of the Arab world, from Nasser to Saddam Hussein to Iran's Ahmadinejad—with the U.N. and world opinion standing idly by. Nasser also poured money and arms into Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization, making it the world's first state-sponsored terrorist group. And again, the world did nothing.

This, in the end, was the most egregious result of Suez. Hammarskjöld had ushered in a new era of international gangsterism, even as the U.N. became an essentially anti-Western body. Its lowest point came less than two decades later, in 1975, when it passed a resolution denouncing Zionism as racism and a triumphant Yasser Arafat addressed the General Assembly with a pistol strapped to his hip.

Suez destroyed the moral authority of the so-called world community. Fifty years later, we are all still living in the rubble. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Battle of Algeria

National reconciliation can kill you.

BY OLIVIER GUITTA

ON JULY 10, a group of terrorists entered a campground in Gouraya, a Mediterranean resort 75 miles from Algiers, and randomly massacred 5 people. The victims were among the 22 killed by terrorists in Algeria in the first half of July—putting that month on track to be a little less bloody than those preceding it. In April, the death toll was 60; in May, 54; in June, 65—this in a country with a population roughly the size of California's, and a government insistent that Islamist terrorism has been basically defeated.

Despite the official happy talk, kidnappings by Islamists to raise money for their cause are a routine occurrence in Algeria. And not a day goes by without terrorists' attacking military personnel, government employees, or ordinary civilians, whom they regard as allies of the government. Just in recent weeks, the GSPC (Algerian Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat), the al Qaeda affiliate that is now the main Algerian terrorist group, orchestrated an assault that killed 17 customs officers when their vehicles were riddled with bullets; another that killed 7 police officers when their truck was hit by an RPG; and the execution of 5 farmers who were shot, then finished off with daggers, their bodies burned. The GSPC also plants bombs in public places to create panic. Boumerdès, for example, about 25 miles from the capital, was hit twice by terror attacks near the main downtown bus station. Authorities are wondering whether Algiers will be next.

Olivier Guitta is a foreign affairs and counterterrorism consultant in Washington, D.C.

In an attempt to end this low-intensity civil war (low-intensity by comparison with the vicious civil war that raged between 1992 and 1999, in which a military regime suppressed the Islamic Salvation Front at a cost of some 150,000 lives), the government last year announced a plan for national reconciliation. The plan was approved in a referendum in September 2005 and promulgated in March. It included a general amnesty for jailed terrorists and Islamists. The authorities released 2,200 Islamists from prison, and, according to Interior Minister Noureddine Yazid Zerhouni, an additional 200 or so Islamist fighters turned themselves in.

Unfortunately, the GSPC would have no part of reconciliation. Shortly before the referendum, its leader, Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud, warned the Algerian people on an Islamist website, "If you participate in this referendum, you have declared war on Islam, you are following Satan, and you have abandoned Allah." Sure enough, in March, a GSPC goon squad gunned down a former military adviser to the group, Abdelkrim Kaduri, who had appealed to GSPC members to support the peace plan. "Do not let this opportunity for reconciliation slip by," Kaduri had urged just before he was killed. His murder was a deterrent to any dissidents who might think of helping the Algerian security services.

And in other ways, the attempt at reconciliation is looking more and more like a recipe for disaster, endangering the security of Western nations. Thus, two individuals freed in the amnesty, Mohamed Benyamina and Akil Chraibi, were part of extremist cells recently dismantled in France. Benyamina belonged to the Bourada cell, which had planned to attack the Paris-Orly airport, the Paris subway, and the headquarters of the DST (the French FBI). Chraibi, a student in Montpellier, was arrested in Algeria while providing the GSPC with explosive devices. French authorities are also concerned about preventing dangerous individuals from entering French territory. In fact, France considers the GSPC its biggest threat, especially since the group's declaration of allegiance to al Qaeda in July 2005 and its recent communiqué identifying France as the number one enemy.

Indeed, the GSPC is now probably the spearhead of jihad in north Africa. Its objective is to make the Maghreb a launching pad for al Qaeda operations in Europe, where the Algerian al Qaeda leader Khalid Abou Bassir is based. Already the GSPC is active well beyond the borders of Algeria. In November 2005, 17 Islamists affiliated with the GSPC were arrested in Morocco. They were allegedly preparing attacks against American and Jewish interests in that country.

One of them, Mohamed Reha, admitted, "Not only were we preparing jihad operations in Morocco but we were working to expand our jihadist movement to all the countries of the Maghreb with the help of our Algerian brothers from the GSPC." According to Reha, Abou Bassir also informed him of the group's plan to create a "jihadist movement for the Arab Maghreb under al Qaeda's leadership with a single organization for Morocco and Algeria."

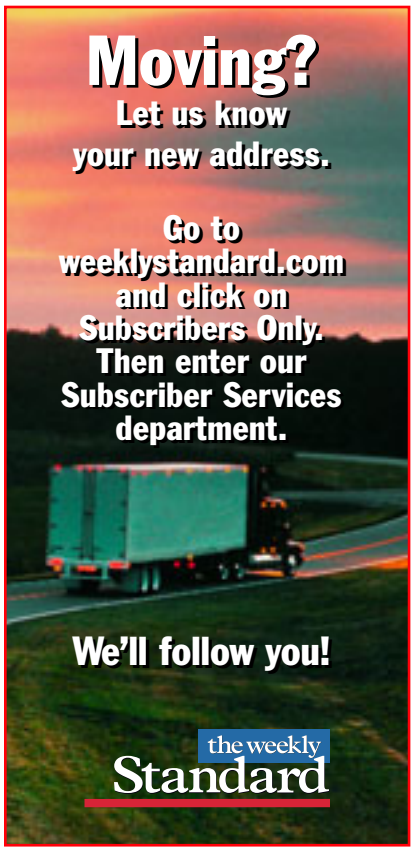
The United States is another target of the GSPC. In fact, GSPC leader Wadoud declared on September 27, 2005: "There is no doubt that defeating evil America will bring an end to all the apostate and treacherous regimes on the planet, including the apostate regime in Algeria. . . . O Allah, destroy America and its apostate tyrants everywhere and bestow victory upon your mujahedeen servants."

It is not surprising, then, that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GSPC camps are being used to train Western and other Muslims who want to join the jihad in Iraq. On June 26, for example, 10 Tunisian Islamists were arrested in Tunisia, near the Algerian border, and confessed to having just come from a GSPC camp en route to Iraq. By using Algeria as a base, jihadists can take some pressure off Syria as the main training ground for foreign terrorists headed for Iraq. Indeed, according to the newsmagazine *Jeune Afrique*, the reason for the visit to Algeria of the assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism, Frances Fragos Townsend, on June 18, was that the new commander of al Qaeda in Iraq, Abu al-Muhajir, allegedly spent time with the GSPC in Algeria.

It is to be hoped that Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki is also paying attention to the Algerian experience. As he considers his own plans for national reconciliation, he must reckon with the fact that Algeria's attempt at reconciliation has not brought peace. ♦



Will Casey Strike Out?

Don't count out Rick Santorum.

BY SALENA ZITO

Pittsburgh

THIS YEAR, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is host to perhaps the most expensive, combative, and rigorously contested U.S. Senate race. Seeking a third term, Republican senator Rick Santorum faces a strong challenge from state treasurer Bob Casey Jr., who sports a political brand name—his father was a popular two-term governor, as well as a state auditor general.

Casey, like his father, holds unconventional positions—for a Democrat—on gun control (he's against it) and abortion (he says he's against it, too). At the moment, Casey's ahead: The most recent Quinnipiac survey has Casey ahead by 18 points, and a recent "Strategic Vision" poll gives Casey a 10-point lead.

The fact is, though, that Bob Casey Jr.'s potential weaknesses—and Santorum's political strengths—make this race far from over.

Casey's been here before. In 2002, eight weeks before the Democratic gubernatorial primary, he had a 26-point lead over current governor Ed Rendell. But, as soon as Casey had to stake out ideological ground and say where he stood on the issues, that lead evaporated. A similar dynamic can be seen in this year's Senate race. So far, Casey has been afraid to take stands. On national affairs, says Dan Ronayne, press secretary for the National Republican Senatorial Campaign Commmittee, "When Casey does speak to issues, it is in platitudes based off Democrat talking points." As Ronayne tells it, while Casey has said he opposes introducing personal savings accounts into Social Security, he hasn't yet said how he would handle the coming entitlement crisis. And on tax cuts, Ronayne goes on, Casey "says he would vote to repeal the [Bush cuts] for the top one percent, but would he have voted against the bills as presented to the senators in 2001 and 2003?" (The Casey campaign did not respond to requests for comment.)

"After 10 years in public office, we still don't hear from Bob Casey on where he stands," says Kent Gates, a senior strategist for Brabender Cox, a media firm working with the Santorum campaign. "He does not want people to know that he is socially conservative in southeastern Pennsylvania, and he does not want voters in western Pennsylvania to know that he is a big spending liberal."

Look at how Casey handled the debate over President Bush's nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. Alito's nomination was not only important on a national scale—it also had a lot to do with the politics of Pennsylvania, as the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, on which Alito sat prior to becoming an associate justice, is based in Philadelphia. But, for nearly two months, Casey avoided saying where he stood on Alito.

In the end, Gov. Rendell provided Casey cover by saying he supported Alito, which prompted Casey to release this statement: "I do not agree with everything that Judge Samuel Alito has done or said . . . however, I agree with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Washington Post* editorial boards

Salena Zito is an editorial columnist and political reporter for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. *She worked on Sen. Santorum's 2000 reelection campaign.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the arguments against Judge Alito do not rise to the level that would require a vote denying him a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court." The issue seemed resolved.

But not really. You see, Rendell's support for Alito made political sense. The governor's wife, Midge, served on the same circuit court as Alito, and the couple has great respect for the jurist. Plus, how Rendell felt about Alito has no bearing on him or his reelection campaign. (He's currently trouncing Republican challenger Lynn Swann in the polls.) Casey, on the other hand, finds himself in a pickle. His more conservative stances on social issues might attract moderates, but they might also alienate liberals. His solution? Say nothing, and hope incumbent-fatigue does the job for him.

It won't work. Charlie Gerow, a Republican political strategist and the CEO of Harrisburg-based Quantum Communications, likes Bob Casey—as the state treasurer. He supported Casey for that position: "I think that Bob Casey is an outstanding public servant and a good man," he says. "He is a good state treasurer and should remain a good state treasurer."

That's because, Gerow says, Santorum will win in November: "Eventually, Bobby Casey comes out of hiding and has to confront him."

When it comes to campaigning, the candidate Casey must eventually confront is no slouch. "Santorum is great on the stump," says Joseph Sabino Mistick, a retired Democratic operative who teaches at Duquesne Law School. "Santorum can start a thousand little fires by constantly raising Casey's faults," Sabino Mistick continues. "He can paint him a conservative, a liberal . . . a man whose career is running for office."

"Rick has always run from behind," adds the Republican consultant Gerow. "He knows how to run a tough race." The media strategist Gates agrees: "Rick Santorum is the best candidate in modern Pennsylvania politics. He is aggressive, tough, and hard-working."

And he's been around for awhile. There's no question the powers of incumbency will work to Santorum's advantage. It won't be long, for example, before the senator starts talking about how he saved several of Pennsylvania's military bases—including the 911th Airlift Wing in Pittsburgh and the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks—from closure last year by the Base Realignment and Closure commission, or BRAC.

Rick Santorum

Santorum also worked closely with Rendell to protect the Willow Grove Naval Air Station from cuts—something Rendell won't soon forget. "Rick Santorum has proven that he gets the job done. Time and time again he has come through," Rendell told me. "Just look at what he did with the BRAC."

"I will eventually campaign with Casey," Rendell went on. "But, no, you won't see me attack Santorum." He added, "I work well with him and [U.S. Sen. Arlen] Specter. When it comes to Pennsylvania, Santorum delivers."

There's another way that being the incumbent helps Santorum. He can look to national Republican heavy hitters like former New York mayor and possible presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani for support. On July 11, in Pittsburgh, Giuliani attended a fundraiser and subsequent rally for Santorum held by local city police, firemen, and first responders.

"Santorum has been a great advocate of the men and women of law enforcement," Giuliani told me as he and Santorum walked across the Roberto Clemente Bridge, which was closed for Major League Baseball's annual All-Star Game. "And he has shown great leadership in the Senate with issues that affect their daily livelihood, like border security and illegal immigration." Look for more national Republicans to flock to Santorum's side in the coming months.

Santorum holds one last trump card. In 2004, the Pennsylvania Republican party was bitterly divided between establishment types supporting veteran senator Arlen Specter and conservative reformers supporting his Republican primary challenger, Rep. Pat Toomey. Toomey, who now runs the conservative Club for Growth, lost that contest—but he seems to harbor no ill will toward Santorum, who supported Specter.

"It is way past time to get on to the business of reelecting Rick," says Toomey, who added that the conservative reform movement in Pennsylvania will be right behind him.

"Are [conservatives] angry?" Toomey asks. "Yes, but in the end, they are going to be there for him." One more reason a Casey victory is far from inevitable. ♦

Illustration by Drew Friedman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Intelligence Dominance

A better way forward in Iraq

By Richard H. Shultz Jr. & Roy Godson

The colonel was just back from Iraq when we met with him in the fall of 2005. He spoke in the blunt way of a soldier who had served 25 years in elite secret units. He had been in plenty of precarious situations and had the battle scars to show for it. The special operations unit he commanded knew how to surprise and kill unsuspecting enemies and had scored some successes, but the colonel was pessimistic about one thing: "No amount of training can prepare you to hunt down the bad guys after midnight when the intelligence you receive does not pinpoint their hideouts."

Other commanders we spoke with who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan had also experienced frustration in their mission—capturing or killing insurgent, terrorist, and militia leaders and key operatives, and taking out the factories where they make improvised explosive devices (IEDs). They echoed the colonel's message: "Actionable intelligence" was often absent from the U.S. war effort. A commander whose area of operations had been Tikrit told us, "Rather than intelligence on precise insurgent targets—'There is a unit of Jihadi fighters using the abandoned Bus Station on Tikriti Road as a base'—we would be told to 'Search for a Jihadi unit in a two-three block area around the Bus Station.'" The difference was between looking for a needle on a platter and a needle in a haystack; between a precise mission and an indefinite one requiring too much time on the ground in hostile territory.

The military men we talked to (all of whom, both active and former operatives, insisted on anonymity) all said the same thing: When we're spending $40 billion a year on intelligence and committing 150,000 men to the Iraqi front, why can't we create the actionable intelligence required to roll up the insurgents? As it worked out, this was exactly the question we'd been trying to answer over the previous year and a half. Our journey had taken us to three continents, where we met, sometimes more than once, with former intelligence, military, police, and domestic/internal security service leaders from democratic governments, and with former leaders of armed groups who were once deadly enemies. In cosmopolitan London, Washington, Tel Aviv, and other world capitals, and in more remote settings in Central America, Mexico, Africa, and Australia, we listened intently as these former practitioners discussed what to our surprise turned out to be a common set of measures—*intelligence dominance* was the summary term we came up with to describe the model—they had used to overcome bloody threats posed by armed groups. They convinced us that this is the wheel the United States must now reinvent if it is to win in Iraq and on other murky fronts of the war on terror.

Comprehensive Intelligence

Our meeting on March 22, 2004, with two former top-ranking Israeli intelligence officers had been scheduled for months. But it was not "business as usual" that day in Tel Aviv. Earlier in the morning, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the main leader of Hamas, had been killed by missiles fired from an Israeli helicopter hovering over the Gaza Strip, not that far from where we were sitting. The operation was one part of Israel's campaign to kill key active terrorist leaders to weaken the group so that it becomes less effective or negotiates an end to the armed struggle. Since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa intifada in 2000, the wheelchair-bound Hamas chief had ordered most of the suicide bombers who had killed Israelis in cafés, on buses, and in other public places. According to the Israelis, from the start of the second intifada through 2005, Pales-

Richard H. Shultz Jr. is director of international security studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and director of research at the Consortium for the Study of Intelligence (CSI). Roy Godson is a professor of government at Georgetown University and president of the National Strategy Information Center. The research for this article was drawn from CSI's Armed Groups Project.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tinian terrorists killed 1,074 Israelis and wounded 7,520, astounding figures for a small country. The comparable losses for a country the size of the United States would be 50,000 dead and 300,000 wounded.

Right on time, the two men appeared in the lobby of the beachfront hotel where we were staying. After exchanging pleasantries at a quiet spot in the hotel's outdoor café, the soft-spoken ex-senior officer of the Shin Bet, Israel's renowned internal security agency, said adamantly, "To defeat terrorists you must know everything about them. Everything! Who are their leaders and how do they plan and carry out operations? How are they organized and what methods are used for recruitment? What are their weaknesses and vulnerabilities?" Drawing on 25 years of experience, including senior command positions, he insisted that without systematic profiles of the enemy, operations to neutralize such unconventional adversaries are usually futile.

The information for such profiles, added his associate, himself a retired general with 30 years in Aman, the intelligence division of the Israeli Defense Forces, requires local intelligence that is collected block by block, village by village. He had relied on this kind of intelligence throughout his career. The two counterterrorism experts then went on to describe the way the local intelligence units had come to be organized and staffed to identify armed group strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities and to turn this information into operational opportunities. Over several hours, they laid out the details of how in a particular locality—a section of a city or rural area—the intelligence unit assigned to it attains comprehensive knowledge of the armed groups in that location. They explained how a profile of each group's ideological and organizational characteristics is produced and exploited.

The Israelis and others have learned over decades that intelligence dominance involves a major commitment of time, money, men, and patience. If you do it right, they explained, you will obtain the intelligence that enables you to control the territory vital to your security.

Some democracies—notably the United Kingdom and Israel—have mastered this approach through bloody trial and error, in the course of meeting the challenges posed by armed groups. Though each country tailored its techniques to the specifics of its geopolitical situation, the techniques they came up with are similar from country to country.

"We had to be in command of the local situation on the ground," said the soft-spoken local practitioner who met us at the airport in Belfast and drove us into the countryside a few weeks after our visit to Israel. He had served at the operational level his whole career, turning down every proffered promotion to a management position because he knew that the war against the IRA and other paramilitary groups had to be waged on the streets and in the alleyways. "We had to know what the IRA boys were doing, keep them on the defensive, always causing them to worry about our next move. You must collect comprehensive intelligence—complete block by block coverage—of each location out of which the terrorists operate."

This intelligence operator described an approach similar to the one the Israelis had told us about. It was perfectly logical; *not* to adopt such a strategy would, in fact, have been counterintuitive. But it was not, and is not, part of the official lexicon of the U.S. intelligence community, whose operations we have both studied for decades. (Perhaps there is one exception: This sort of approach briefly became part of the U.S. tool kit during the late 1960s in Vietnam, but it became a lesson lost when the North Vietnamese invaded and their tanks swept into Saigon in 1975.)

In talking with the intelligence practitioners on the island of Ireland, along the Mediterranean, and elsewhere, we tried to explain the challenge of changing the U.S. intelligence community's conception of its mission, as well as its approaches to collection, analysis, and counterintelligence, all of which are deeply rooted in World War II and the Cold War experience. This enduring organizational culture, we said, with its focus on threats posed by states, heavy reliance on technology, and relative dearth of case officers who do local intelligence work, does not provide the kinds of capabilities they employed to deal with the armed group challenges. "Academic nonsense!" said one of these former senior officers during our discussion. "The United States needs to get serious with what you call 'intelligence dominance' in Iraq, or suffer the strategic consequences."

Organizing for Intelligence Dominance

Putting intelligence dominance into practice to gain control of territory plagued by armed groups means utilizing all the tools in the intelligence toolbox—integrating collection, analysis, covert action, and counterintelligence instruments—to maximize effectiveness against targets. The operations that flow from intelligence dominance may involve targeted killings of terrorists, as they sometimes have for the Israelis, or the interdiction of arms and money and the denial of safe houses and the occupation of territory, as they did more often for the British fighting the IRA. But there is one common denominator: Those intelligence services of friendly governments that have become dominant started at the local level, working through various types of local intelligence units.

Penetrating an armed group's apparatus to learn of its capabilities and intentions requires human intelligence ("HUMINT," in the trade). Electronic surveillance alone won't do. It can help, but only local HUMINT will tell you what the enemy plans to do, and where and when he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intends to do it. This was a mantra we heard repeatedly from those who had had success fighting on the front lines of this war of shadows in these and other democracies.

"Developing a comprehensive profile of your enemy is a building-block process," explained one former chief who was intimately involved in doing exactly this when he was coming up through the ranks of his service. "We did it street by street, village by village, beginning with basic intelligence collected at the local level."

Basic intelligence? It took some explaining before we fully grasped what this entailed. A former Shin Bet specialist who had worked with local units for more than two decades described it as "the big picture of daily life in your area of responsibility." Basic intelligence is information on all key political, social, and religious activists and leaders in a specific geographical locale. It spells out how they communicate and interact with one another and the surrounding population. It pinpoints all the major financial, political, social, and religious networks the armed group uses.

"Collecting it is labor intensive," this veteran added. "Up to 40 percent of your collection capabilities gather basic intelligence. And most of your sources are not recruited agents in the classical sense. You establish networks of local people you meet and interact with frequently." He was describing a situation in which an operative functions somewhat like the policeman on the beat—constantly talking to, interacting with, and keeping tabs on the people in his neighborhood and, most of all, keeping his eyes open for slight changes or new developments in the local scene.

The men we met who had battled the paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland emphasized that infrastructure intelligence was the next step after basic intelligence had been established. A former chief of intelligence for the second largest police Special Branch in the United Kingdom told us, "You begin with personnel. Who are the leaders, their strengths and weaknesses and, importantly, political and other differences that affect their cooperation and interaction? Who makes up the cell's rank and file, what skills do they possess, and how committed are they to the cause? What are the cell's physical capabilities—safe houses, weapons caches, bomb-making facilities, and so on? Once we had it, the big picture, we could really begin to think about what to do with the IRA groups operating in our territory."

Infrastructure intelligence is mainly collected through recruited agents, run by case officers whom the former Special Branch intelligence chief called "hybrids." When collecting basic intelligence, they followed standard operating procedures akin to those of law enforcement. But when the focus narrowed to the armed group, their procedures corresponded to those of standard intelligence tradecraft.

When human collectors are in place and the composition and nature of the armed group has been defined, our interlocutor from the Special Branch said, "You're now ready to go get them, to put their leaders out of commission and shut down their safe houses and their bomb factories—in today's term, IED factories." To do this, he said, you use target intelligence to pinpoint the movements and activities of key leaders and personnel in armed groups well before the point of attack. This information from recruited agents is supplemented by intercepts of various electronic communications, from cell phones to the Internet, and by photographic imagery. The result is continual live coverage of selected targets, augmented by basic and infrastructure intelligence.

One former operator gave us an example: "Back in the mid-1980s I was running a local intelligence unit covering a particularly dangerous part of Belfast. I learned from information collected in another part of the city that several IRA subcommanders were going to hold a big planning meeting for a bombing campaign at a safe house in my grid. We put all the ones we knew about under close observation but came up dry. None of them gave any indication that they were planning for a major activity.

"Then the break came from a small piece of local intelligence. One of the boys in my unit had gotten pretty close to a local grocery store owner. He would see the owner two, three times a week. At one of those get-togethers the store owner happened to mention that a Mrs. McCoy had come in several times over the last week with grocery lists many times larger than the size of her normal purchases. 'You'd think she was planning to feed a small army,' the grocery man said. We put her house under surveillance, tapped the phones, all the normal stuff. Turns out it was the IRA safe house we were looking for. You boys can fill in the details of the eventual outcome."

Opportunity Maximizers

As we talked with these professionals, we realized that intelligence and security services that achieve intelligence dominance do so by seamlessly joining analysts and operators at the local level. The U.S. approach, on the other hand, generally tends to maintain definite boundaries, often sharp divides, between operational and analytical divisions of the intelligence services.

Here is how one highly experienced analyst we interviewed at length—an Israeli woman—described this alternative arrangement. "*Almost every* piece of analysis I produced included an operational recommendation. I had to identify an operational objective, a target; it was part of my job description." She was trained to deduce from the intelligence data she handled operational opportunities that could subsequently be exploited by military, intelligence, and police forces.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We explained to her that this was very different from the way many U.S. intelligence analysts approached their job, which in the main built walls between analysts and operators in order to preserve the "objectivity" of the former. "Doesn't your approach taint the analyst?" we asked, "by drawing him in too close to operations?"

Shaking her head vigorously, she replied, "Intelligence analysts do not live in some pristine world." The kind of operationally focused assessments she produced, assessments that identified specific armed group targets, were generated by working at the local level—hand in hand, day in, day out—with human collectors and operators. Her role was to identify local collection gaps and task the local case officers to fill the gaps from their sources.

We asked for examples of how this worked on a daily basis with case officers. She talked about situations in which she had listened in on meetings taking place in the field between case officers in her unit and their recruited agents in "real time." "I could say to the case officer, 'Ask him about this . . . ' or 'Get him to clarify that . . . ' By being able to do so, I could get the specific details I needed to guide the police and military commanders."

She could request that a specific suspect be detained if, based on other sources, she knew he was potentially a valuable source for a critical piece of information. She could request the interrogation take place quickly, especially if the intelligence sought was perishable. She could provide a local interrogator with specific questions and detailed knowledge that he could use in interviewing the suspect.

Finally, she had access to local signals intelligence (SIGINT) that was collected by specialists she worked with. As with case officers and interrogators, she could point the SIGINT specialists to specific targets within the armed groups in her sector. She also could pass on requests to have national level SIGINT and imagery platforms focus on time-sensitive armed group targets.

All of this information was fused and rapidly assessed with one principal purpose in mind—identify specific targets in her sector to attack or co-opt. The action could be executed by her service or some other arm of the government. But the objective was always the same: to "seek out opportunities to hit the terrorists."

Collectively, the men and women sitting around the table at another meeting in Tel Aviv had vast experience targeting enemies in unfriendly occupied territory. They admitted that they had not always had intelligence dominance, and that they had had it and lost it before reestablishing it. After establishing intelligence dominance in the territories occupied after the 1967 war and in parts of Lebanon in the 1990s, as a result of the Oslo Accords and the withdrawal from Lebanon, they had to give up this advantage and withdraw from areas in the West Bank and Gaza. Then, when the second intifada erupted in late 2000 and Israeli casualties mounted, they were tasked with reestablishing their dominance. It was not easy to do so, but they did, and their intelligence successes contributed to the Palestinian Authority's gradual deemphasis of terrorist activity against the Israelis in favor of political and diplomatic initiatives, and even led Hamas to engage in a temporary cease-fire that held until recently.

For hours, they described the organizational structure required, and listening to them we realized that the intelligence-led struggle they described had relevance for the U.S. effort in Iraq and elsewhere. The first step was to divide the targeted territory—neighborhood, sector, even individual street—into grids. The next step was to assign to each grid an intelligence unit with responsibility for collecting basic, infrastructure, and target intelligence and turning it into operational assessments that could be used to weaken and undermine all armed groups active in that locale. One veteran described these local units as "the brains of the entire intelligence and security system."

There were several factors that contributed to a unit's success. First, each member received considerable professional training before going to the field. "You don't recruit kids to the service," said the one former intelligence chief, who retired at a rank equivalent to major general in the army. "We looked for men and women with successful work experience, who were in their late twenties." They either had already mastered spoken Arabic or passed a language proficiency test demonstrating their capacity to do so. Once selected, all recruits went through months of rigorous training. Only then were they considered ready for operations.

The same was true for the units' interrogators. Standards for selection were demanding. Knowledge of the adversary's language and culture was a given. Then, after a nine-month course in the methods of interrogation, stressing how to use knowledge and skill rather than violence, they went to a field unit to observe and learn from practitioners in action.

The same kind of professional preparation was mandated for the other members of the local intelligence unit. But the lines of communication and coordination within the units were as important as the professionalism of the members, these intelligence veterans repeatedly stressed. The commanders of the local units were taught that communications among them must be rapid and seamless. That was a second secret of success—short lines of communication between case officers, analysts, local SIGINT, and other members of the unit. The centrality of analysts in the local units was a third factor. "They identify the targets and focus the collectors to acquire the intelligence necessary to develop operational recommendations for how and when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to move against them," said one former officer, who for over a decade coordinated several of these local intelligence units.

Another factor contributing to the success of local intelligence units was the length of time personnel assigned to them served. In most cases there was a commitment for several years. And not infrequently, it was extended. Moreover, one's next tour was often in a regional intelligence center with responsibility for coordinating the operational activities of several local units, including the one in which he or she had previously served.

The final condition for success was collaboration of the intelligence unit's commander with local police and military (combat) commanders. The two sides—intelligence and operations—had to develop a symbiotic relationship. The local unit had to develop close—very close—relationships with the local combat forces that had the capability and responsibility to go out and kill or capture the adversary if they knew where he was. The military and security forces had to receive and act on precise information in a timely way, usually within hours.

And, in turn, the combat commander had to use operations and boots on the ground to pass on quickly to the local intelligence units whatever information he came across in his unit's daily street patrols on foot. And this type of mutual support would continue up the line at the regional and national levels. This was another key to intelligence dominance.

The Plan

At the end of the 18-month tutorial we received from former senior intelligence and security officers, we thought we saw what the United States could do in places like Iraq. It was necessary to create an architecture of security based on intelligence dominance at the ground level. To do this would involve establishing physical control of territory and introducing intelligence operatives into areas within this territory who knew the language and culture and who were ready to stay on the ground for a prolonged period of time. Intelligence dominance would not "win" the war against the insurgents, but it could provide the means to win.

We presented the lessons we had learned, or the model, to senior officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council, and the intelligence community, as well as to the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Some then asked us to determine how intelligence dominance could specifically help achieve U.S. objectives in Iraq.

This past fall, we turned those details into an operational plan for establishing intelligence dominance in Iraq. A second round of briefings ensued. To put the plan into action, we proposed two things: first, a command decision to undertake a major pilot project to test this intelligence model in two regions; second, recognition that results will not come overnight. It will take months to select and train a hundred or more Americans in these techniques, and several more months for them to pass these methods on to Iraqis. Once that has been done, joint U.S.-Iraqi local intelligence units can be established in selected areas. While U.S. personnel can help direct the units, operations in the field will be executed by Iraqis, who can fit into the local setting.

After more than two years of protracted fighting against dispersed insurgent groups, it had become clear to at least some leaders that we had no alternative except to see if we could adapt the model for Iraq. And they arranged for other key officials to learn about it in an effort to forge a consensus. But innovation in Washington comes hard. A number of objections—showstoppers—rolled in.

Among them: the "not invented here" objection. This is a self-inflicted wound. It prevents the United States from drawing on the lessons and knowledge that friends and allies are standing at the ready, eager to share.

Next, we were told that the successful practices of others were just not relevant or adaptable to the situation in Iraq. In Iraq, Americans look different from our enemy, don't live next door, and don't know the language or culture. Contrary to myth, however, few British, Australian, or Israeli intelligence professionals looked like their adversaries or spoke their dialects or knew their tribal culture before training. Those who employed intelligence dominance did so by adapting it to diverse situations. There is little reason to believe the model cannot be adapted to Iraq, where Iraqis would implement it on the ground.

Then we heard that it would take too long to implement. "We are in the middle of a war and do not have the luxury of time and experimentation." This showstopper is equally illogical. While time may be running out, there is no available substitute. We know where more of the same will lead.

Finally, we were asked, Where would we get Americans or Iraqis who were willing to face the dangers inherent in local intelligence units? But every day, many Americans, Iraqis, and others are already out in the Sunni Triangle taking extraordinary risks.

As we listened to these and other doubts, the words of highly successful foreign practitioners kept reverberating in our heads: "The United States needs to get serious in Iraq . . . or suffer the strategic consequences." They are exactly right. And until we do so, the dark alleyways of Ramadi, Falluja, Tikrit, and elsewhere will belong to the insurgents, and we will not prevail in this intelligence-led struggle. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dresden, 1945

Bettmann / Corbis

Scorched Earth

Was the destruction of German cities justified? By Christopher Hitchens

I am sure I can count on readers of this magazine to have sat up late with Victor Klemperer's diary of survival under the Third Reich: *I Will Bear Witness*. This is the single most important document from the era of National Socialism. It gives an account of every day of Hitler's 13-year dictatorship, written by a German-Jewish convert to Protestantism who had married a heroic Protestant woman, and who briefly imagined that his dual loyalty (to employ an otherwise suspect phrase) might win him some immunity. Swiftly disabused on that score, Klemperer resolved to depict his beloved Germany's collapse into barbarism.

Christopher Hitchens is the author, most recently, of Thomas Jefferson: Author of America.

The diary possesses three dimensions that are of great interest to us. By its portrayal of innumerable acts of decency and solidarity on the part of ordinary Germans, it seems to rebut the Daniel Jonah Goldhagen diatribe about "willing executioners." By its agonizing description of the steady and pitiless erosion of German Jewry, it puts to shame all those who doubt—whatever the argument may be over numbers or details—that Hitler's state had a coldly evolved plan of extirpation. And it forces one to reconsider the Allied policy of "area bombing."

Among the Dead Cities
The History and Moral Legacy of the World War II Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan
by A.C. Grayling
Walker, 384 pp., $25.95

By February 1945, the Klemperers had been moved to a center in Dresden to await the final transport to "the East," from which none of their friends had ever returned. They were among the very last; those married to "Aryans" had been permitted some latitude. But they knew very well what was coming. And then, beginning on the night of February 13, the most beautiful city in Germany was suddenly set on fire from end to end, by a scientifically designed bombing pattern that swept away its architecture and roasted and melted and buried at least 40,000 of its citizens.

The Klemperers were not at the exact epicenter, but Victor was injured in the eye by debris and slightly scorched, and the couple were nearly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

separated. Finding Nazi authority destroyed after the departure of the Anglo-American bombers, they took off their yellow-star armbands and began to walk toward the Red Army.

So we might phrase the question in this way. Did the immolation of Dresden and so many other German cities liberate the Klemperers, or would the Royal Air Force (RAF) and United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) have equally happily burned them to death?

In the latter case, we would never have been able to read the record of the Third Reich's own Winston Smith, which is almost a small thing when compared with the treasure house of manuscripts, churches, universities, galleries, and museums that vanished into filthy smoke. And perhaps one should not overemphasize cultural artifacts over human beings: Hundreds of thousands of German civilians, including the flower of the German anti-Nazi labor movement, were burned or buried alive in these incredible bombardments, where we know from declassified papers that Churchill's advisers told him to blast working-class districts because the houses were more tightly packed together.

There is something grandly biblical and something dismally utilitarian about this long argument between discrepant schools of historians and strategists. In the Old Testament, God reluctantly considers lenience for the "cities of the plain," on condition that a bare minimum of good men can be identified as living there. The RAF code name for the first major firestorm raid on Hamburg was "Operation Gomorrah." And this was a city that had always repudiated the Nazi party. Some say that Dresden was not really a military target and that it was obliterated mainly in order to impress Joseph Stalin (perhaps not a notably fine war aim) while others—Frederick Taylor most recently—argue that Dresden was indeed a hub city for Hitler's armies, and that doing a service to a wartime ally is part of the strategic picture in any case.

This leaves us with a somewhat arid and suspect antithesis: Were these bombings war crimes, and if so, were they justified on the grounds that they shortened the duration of the criminal war itself?

Anthony Grayling, a very deft and literate English moral philosopher, now seeks to redistribute the middle of this latent syllogism. He argues from the evidence that "area bombing" was not even really intended to shorten the war, and that in any case it did not do so. And he further asserts that the policy was an illegal and immoral one by the same standards that the Allies had announced at the onset of hostilities. This, at least, has the virtue of recasting a hitherto rather sterile debate. And some of what he says is unarguable.

Many smaller German cities—Würzburg being the most painful example—were of no military importance and were destroyed despite their exquisite architecture for no reason except to serve as bomb-fodder, and as practice for bombers. The British government had indeed publicly forsworn any deliberate attack on civilian targets. The famous Air Marshal Arthur "Bomber" Harris, who was criticized at the time in Parliament and the press, and within the Churchill administration, took the view that since Britain had starved hundreds of thousands of Germans by a naval blockade in the preceding 1914-18 war, there was little moral difference in the precise way in which one took German life. He more or less admitted that he was incinerating German cities in 1944 and 1945, not because he had to, but because he could. It was what Bomber Command had trained to do. It was the only way he knew of taking the war to the enemy.

Lest anyone take refuge in the idea of retrospective scruple here, allow me to quote what Winston Churchill minuted to his Chiefs of Staff on March 28, 1945:

> It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing German cities for the sake of *increasing the terror, though under other pretexts*, should be reviewed. Otherwise, we shall come into control of an utterly ruined land. The destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing. [Italics mine.]

One is compelled to notice that Churchill here is still repressing his moral misgivings underneath pragmatic ones: Any more of this "terror" and there's not enough Germany to take over. But both impulses are still present. (As they were when he rejected the wicked Morgenthau Plan aimed at the postwar depopulation and deindustrialization of Germany at the Quebec meeting with Franklin Roosevelt in 1944. Even Tories like himself had assimilated J.M. Keynes's *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, about the failure of Versailles, and were resolved not to repeat the crime or the blunder.)

Once again demonstrating that he is not a hindsight-historian, or over-the-shoulder philosopher, Grayling quotes from the extensive debate that occurred in contemporary Britain. Rather to the credit of my fellow countrymen, I think, there were eloquent complaints in both houses of Parliament, in the press, and among intellectuals. Some of these were honorable—it was found that the inhabitants of badly bombed English cities did not want a policy of retaliation—and some were based on a faintly spurious post-1918 quasi-pacifism and moral equivalence. George Orwell was a great scourge of the illusions of the latter faction, but when he visited Germany after 1945 he was struck almost dumb by the hitherto unguessed-at extent of the devastation.

Suppose we leave these moral qualms to one side for a minute, even though their suppression would potentially license anything, from torture to genocide, if it "worked." The simple question would then become: Did it work? Changing the discourse a little too swiftly for my taste, Grayling argues that only precision bombing of oil facilities in particular either did work or ought to have been tried. At one point, it is true, Albert Speer reported to his Führer that the industrial capacity of the Third Reich could not take any more saturation bombing. But he regained his nerve, and his giant enterprise of slave labor and state capitalism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

continued to perform astonishingly well until the very end. The things that really "shortened" the war were "pinpoint" attacks on Hitler's fuel lines, and the remorseless advance of the Red Army after the titanic battle at Kursk.

Mention of the latter somehow shrinks Grayling's moral universe. If the Anglo-American effort was benefiting from Stalin's total war in the East, then what does mere bombing of civilians have to do with it? One might as well shift the center of ethical gravity, and refocus on the mass Russian rape and pillage, followed by the incarceration of Eastern Europe and the partition and looting of Eastern Germany, that was also a price of Hitler's defeat. (Victor Klemperer, who rashly opted to become an East German Communist after 1945, wrote a successor diary about that horror, too.)

That ensuing nightmare may also have been the revenge for the Hitler-Stalin pact—and nobody charges British and American forces with any systematic atrocities against German civilians *after* 1945—but it is therefore also a blast of the hellish wind that Hitlerism sowed, and thus part of the restatement of the problem to begin with. Grayling has thus not been as daring as he believes he has.

In a recent exchange with him at the Goethe Institute in Washington, I offered a criticism of British policy that went further than his. Like him, I was brought up in urban areas of England that still showed the scars of Nazi bombardment. Like him, I began to doubt the official justifications for the policy imposed by Air Marshal Harris. But these misgivings ought to begin well before the horrible attack on Hamburg in 1943. In 1938, the British government was contacted by emissaries from the Kreisau Circle, a group of courageous German oppositionists led by Count Helmuth von Moltke. They told Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax that if Great Britain would stand adamantly by its guarantees to Czechoslovakia, and promise to make a stand against fascist irredentism, they could put Hitler under arrest. Their aim would be the restoration of German democracy, but their pretext would be that they had averted a war. This could only be done if the British maintained a belligerent policy instead of a capitulationist one.

Who knows if this would have succeeded? We only know that officers as highly placed as Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of German military intelligence, and many influential politicians and diplomats, were part of the plan. We also know that Chamberlain and Halifax refused to talk to them. There is something unbearable in the idea of a British regime, that would not fire or risk a shot against Hitler in 1938, later deploying horrific violence against German civilians instead. There is also something intolerable about the Munich deal with Hitler, a sellout of Prague which led inexorably to the Nazi-Soviet pact, resulting shortly in the destruction of magnificent German cities in order to bring a smile to the face of Stalin. I will never be one of those Englishmen who can complacently regard the years between 1940 and 1945 as a "finest hour."

On the other hand, once the battle had eventually been joined, one has little choice but to regard it as an anti-Nazi war at last. And to me, this involves viewing it from the standpoint of a German antifascist, or a non-German slave laborer or other victim of German racism. And here, atheist though I am, I have to invoke something like the biblical. It was important not just that the Hitler system be defeated, but that it be totally and unsentimentally destroyed. The Nazis had claimed to be invincible and invulnerable: Very well, then, they must be visited by utter humiliation. No more nonsense and delusion, as with the German Right after 1918 and its myth of a stab in the back. Here comes a verdict with which you cannot argue. I choose to quote Thomas Mann, a non-Jewish German who had to decide the matter in great personal anguish. In his *Doctor Faustus*, the narrator calls the ruin of Munich by the bombers "a Last Judgment" and then goes on to say:

> Granted, the destruction of our cities from the air has long since turned Germany into an arena of war; and yet we find it inconceivable, impermissible, to think that Germany could ever become such an arena in the true sense, and our propaganda has a curious way of warning the foe against incursion on our soil, our sacred German soil, as if that would be some grisly atrocity. . . . Our sacred German soil! As if anything were sacred about it, as if it had not long ago been desecrated again and again by the immensity of our rape of justice and did not lie naked, both morally and in fact, before the power of divine judgment. Let it come!

"Let it come!" Good grief; it is hard to think even of any non-German wishing to go that far. (Mann used to broadcast on American radio to Germany.) But anything less than the apocalyptic seems inadequate. Eva Klemperer, a staunch and principled German Lutheran, told her husband that, after what she had experienced under Hitler, she could not find it in herself to truly regret the firestorm of Dresden. And what of the Slav and Balkan and Polish and Jewish slaves in Speer's underground hell holes, forced to dig out pits for the rocket-bombs that were being directed at London? Did they not cheer silently every time the very earth shook with revenge?

Heinrich Böll, one of the greatest of Germany's postwar writers—and a conscript on the Eastern front—wrote a posthumous letter to his sons, telling them that they only needed to know one thing about their fellow citizens: Did they refer to May 1945 as the defeat of Germany, or the liberation? I shall put this tersely and take my chances: A "pinpoint" bombing of Dresden's railheads in 1945 would still have left the Nazi authorities in power and allowed them to send the last transports to the killing fields.

A time for the ultimate ruling sometimes has to come, or else Negro quasi-serfs might even now be selling ice cream to obese children on the still-wooden boardwalks of Atlanta. If the party of Abraham Lincoln instead of Andrew Johnson could have followed the war parties of William T. Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant, think what America might have been spared. In

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the present case, the parties of Kurt Schumacher and Willy Brandt and even Konrad Adenauer were able to follow, and they managed their work as German democrats because there was simply no rival narrative or myth. *Tabula rasa.*

Nonetheless, and because one must always respect other narratives, one should also acknowledge the absolute right of Germans to reconsider this subject. There have been some important recent examples. The best is that of the late W.G. Sebald, whose book *On the Natural History of Destruction* took its title from an article that Lord Zuckerman, one of the advocates of area bombing, could never bring himself to write. It uses the word "annihilation" somewhat promiscuously: The Allies do not have to prove that they did not intend the annihilation of Germany. A more questionable book is Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand* (*The Fire*), a populist success that insinuates the word Holocaust into the argument. This is pardonable in one way, since "holocaust" literally means to be consumed by flames. But one should not tolerate any easy comparison to more definitive German terms such as *Endlosung*, or "final solution," which seem to mean much less yet which signify much more.

Grayling is rightly insistent that nothing he says should be construed as permission for any such cheap self-pity, let alone equivalence. But he commits two errors of judgment and taste. First, he abandons his vow to avoid hindsight, and suggests that the British and American bomber crews should have refused to obey their orders. In a war with a totalitarian regime that still had rockets more advanced than anything in the possession of the Allies, this recommendation seems morally null at best. It was not then known for a certainty that area bombing might not do the job, and those in command had the duty as well as the right to try any expedient. And then there is this, as if in tribute to today's other "moral equivalence" ratbags:

> A surprise attack on a civilian population aimed at causing maximum hurt, shock, disruption and terror: there comes to seem very little difference in principle between the RAF's Operation Gomorrah, or the USAAF's atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York by terrorists on 11 September 2001 . . . To say that the principle underlying "9/11," Hamburg and Hiroshima is the same is to say that the same moral judgment applies to all three.

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis / Frederick Ramage

Well, one can certainly agree that the last sentence is a null and tedious tautology. But one does not scan the works of professional philosophers in order to come across tautologies. One scans them to see tautologies exposed. This drivel is exactly what German and other neo-Nazis do utter, as any reader of their nasty websites can discern, and its repetition by Grayling is a subversion of all the care and measure that he brings to the subject. In what declension of "just war" theory, on which he wastes a few pages, would Osama bin Laden be allowed into the argument? Proportionality?

I will admit that I have never heard or read a justification for the hideous destruction of Nagasaki, and I can say that the late Edward Teller once told me that he always favored a "demonstration" detonation to convince the Japanese leadership to surrender, which means that we might have avoided Hiroshima as well. Any argument that any action is moral, on the ground of its being "war-shortening," is thin and glib, and may also be hateful and false. (It may even be that Harry Truman hit Japan with atomic weapons in order to impress Stalin. If so, what a lot of cities that boorish Moloch appears to have needed as a human sacrifice!)

However, if we are to be allowed alternative historical courses and speculations, there is a "moral" that Grayling overlooks. What if the RAF had been in good enough shape to inflict "terror" on Berlin in the fall of 1939? What if the United States had determined to strike the Imperial Japanese Navy first? What if the League of Nations had decided to stand by the Spanish Republic and Abyssinia, and had pounded Franco's and Mussolini's armies before they could get off the mark?

Those who oppose violence on principle are called pacifists. Those who oppose it until its use is too little and too late, or too *much* and too late, should be called casuists. Those who try to resist their own despotisms, and who appeal in vain to lazy democracies who are also among the potential victims, and who welcome the eventual arrival of the bombs and planes—I am thinking of some courageous Serbian and Iraqi democrats—should be called our allies now, and in Europe should have been our allies no later than 1933.

Moral crisis is the vile residue of moral cowardice, and Grayling has fully proved this without quite intending to do so. His book is a treatise, not on the dubiety of the retributive, but on the urgency and integrity of the "preemptive." ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Visiting Farmer

Paris, 1954, and a close encounter with William Faulkner. **BY CYNTHIA GRENIER**

Last summer, when Oprah relaunched her book club by promoting three of William Faulkner's novels—*As I Lay Dying*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Light in August*—I had to wonder what on earth he would have thought of it. To say nothing of a full-page ad in the *New York Times* telling readers they could sign up to watch "the brand-new Faulkner Video Series from the comfort of your own home." All this stirred my memory, because the first article I ever had published was an interview with the notoriously difficult-to-interview William Faulkner.

In my senior year at Radcliffe, Albert Guerard was giving a course on "Hardy, Conrad, and Gide," and somewhere along the way we sidelined into a rather lengthy discussion of William Faulkner and his writings. I recollect buying a paperback edition of *Sanctuary* at the Harvard Coop, and reading for the first time the author who (Guerard had told us) was more appreciated in France than in his own country.

I wasn't particularly impressed at the time, but that might have been because I was in the midst of discovering Joseph Conrad, and absorbing everything he'd written as fast as I could. (I wound up writing an honors thesis on "Realism and Symbolism in the Shorter Novels of Joseph Conrad.") Four months after graduation I married Richard Grenier in Cambridge City Hall, and that same afternoon we sailed for France on the *Ile de France*, on Richard's Fulbright Grant to study French theater.

After a most agreeable year of absorbing French theatrical life, I managed to talk my way into a job at the American Embassy with the United States Information Services (USIS), which was quartered in the handsome onetime Rothschild mansion at 41 rue Saint-Honoré, next door to the British Embassy and a half-block down from Hermès. A spacious, well-kept garden with a vast green lawn and tall chestnut trees lay at the rear of the building.

One day in September 1954, a telegram arrived on my desk announcing the impending visit of the Nobel Prize-winning novelist William Faulkner to Paris. USIS would be charged with looking after him during his brief stay.

Being somewhat aggressive by nature, I presumed on my acquaintance with his work—I'd caught up on most of his major novels since Harvard Yard days—and, by virtue of a complicated link to him involving a Southern woman (a close friend of his who also happened to be close to Albert Marre, director of the Brattle Street Theater Group in Cambridge), I was assigned to Faulkner.

At that time, I had no idea what publication would want an interview with William Faulkner; but since his distaste for interviews was well known, I figured someone out there in the literary world would surely be interested. Besides, having been around theater people for a few years, I was fairly confident I could cope with any temperamental artist sort.

So, at one of Faulkner's first visits to the embassy, I simply walked up to him and mentioned the name of the southern woman. The wary look on his face relaxed into a partial smile of acknowledgment. I asked whether I could interview him while he was in Paris. We settled on a time and place.

Faulkner was a small, trim, handsome man with a well-brushed head of white hair, tanned face, very alert, with small black-brown eyes under epicanthic lids. There was an air about him that said: "Don't try to talk to me. You won't like it." It was a look I would see many times later with celebrities in public, their faces tightening into hostility.

There was something else in Faulkner's manner: He exuded a kind of reserve, a certain diffidence. You felt you were in the presence of an animal in the wild that called for you to hold out your hand with salt on it, and wait patiently for him to approach you. But being young, fairly presentable, and having on my lips the name of a mutual acquaintance as I greeted him, seemed to do the trick. I've considered since whether he was coming on to me, and decided he simply liked that I was young and interested in what he had to say.

It was mid-morning when I led him out to the garden, where we sat down on the grass under a tall chestnut tree. You couldn't hear the city traffic within the sheltered grounds. Faulkner was wearing a light blue Brooks Brothers shirt with the sleeves rolled up. His Harris tweed jacket, with dark leather elbow patches, lay beside him.

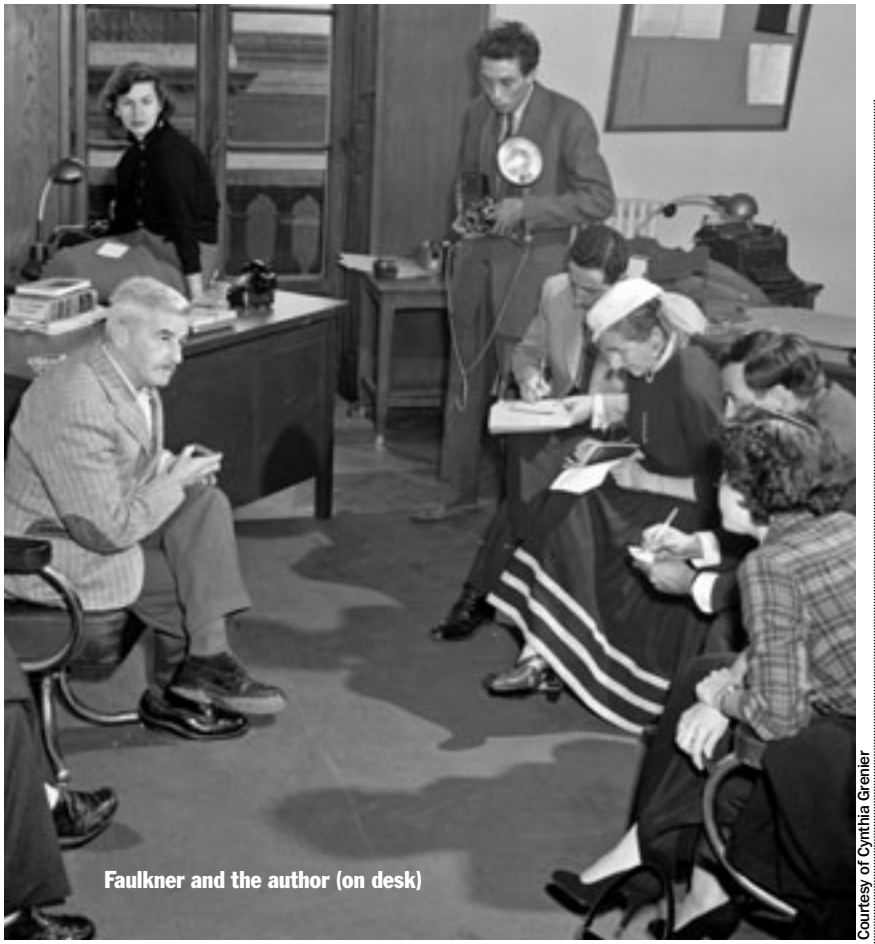
I thought his bearing and appearance belied his 57 years. His chin jutted up and out, meeting the world directly and defiantly. He spoke in a soft, slow voice with what might be called a genteel Southern accent. Sometimes he spoke in short, almost abrupt sentences—"'cause I do"—and at other times, when he talked about his craft, or his beliefs, fine, long, convoluted sentences, reminiscent of his prose, would roll forth.

In the course of the conversation he rarely took the lead, leaving it, without appearing to, to my initiative. He said he didn't like journalists and formal interviews, but with young people he enjoyed talking, feeling they were genuinely interested in what he had to say.

A few days earlier in Paris, at a conventional press conference, French

Cynthia Grenier is a writer in Washington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Faulkner and the author (on desk)

Courtesy of Cynthia Grenier

journalists kept asking him questions about philosophy and the meaning of his novels, and more than once Faulkner would reply, very tight-lipped: "I am not a man of letters, I am only a farmer." (His French was fluent, but the rhythm of his speech was deeply and distinctly Mississippian.) He wasn't angry, but coldly contemptuous of the person asking the question. I had the feeling, observing him in a number of these situations over several days, that Faulkner took a kind of mean satisfaction in putting the other person down. He never once lost his composure.

I found his manner, a combination of shyness and defensiveness, placed me on my honor not to probe those forbidden areas—"literary" analysis of his work, symbolic content, and the like—but to seek contact on a human level. While talking or listening, Faulkner smoked his pipe from time to time, filling it automatically from a yellow oilskin pouch. He projected a sense of unity and great internal reserve about his person. Yet, in spite of this reserve, he emanated throughout our talk a very considerable and engaging quiet charm, both courtly and puckish.

Looking back, I realize that I *did* succeed in breaking down at least a little of his formidable reserve. In response to my question about how he felt about his own work, he answered that he judged his books by how much work and agony went into them.

"Something like *As I Lay Dying* was easy, real easy," he said. "A *tour de force*. It took me just about six weeks." He grinned. "I could write a book like that with both hands tied behind my back. Just came like that. The book which took the most agony was *The Sound and the Fury.* Took me five years of reworking and rewriting. Never did finish it."

When I asked him how he felt about his books being read and discussed around the world, he replied with a little nod of approval: "I like the idea of the world I created being a kind of keystone in the universe. Feel that if I ever took it away the universe around that keystone would crumble away. If they believed in my world in America the way they do abroad, I could probably run one of my characters for president."

I remember him pausing as he studiously tamped down his pipe. "Maybe Flem Snopes." He looked up quickly at me to see my reaction: Flem Snopes, of course, was the most disreputable of all Faulkner's characters.

"I see you've got some of us Greniers living in a shack as half-wits down in Yoknapatawpha County," I responded.

Faulkner looked at me with interest.

"Why, sure," he said amiably. "Grenier was one of the first three settlers in my county. There was Habersham, Holston, and the Frenchman Grenier."

I like that his parting statement to me, as we walked out of the grounds, was advice to young writers. "The most important thing is for them to write," he said.

> They shouldn't ought to care about the public. They should just get the words out of themselves and down on paper. What matters is at the end of life, when you're about to pass into oblivion, that you've at least scratched "Kilroy was here" on the last wall of the universe. Nothing else matters. Don't pay attention to success. She's, like I told you, feminine. Don't chase her. Like a woman, she'll come fawning after. What counts is that you've done something.

His final words, as we parted and he looked up at the clear blue autumn sky, were: "The French don't have any word for Indian summer, do they? They should."

The interview ran in a little literary magazine, *Accent*, and later that same year in French in *La Table Ronde*, a literary monthly. In 1968, Random House published it in a collection of interviews with Faulkner, conducted between 1926 and his death in 1962, entitled *Lion in the Garden*. I confess that I still get a little glow from the comment that runs at the head of my interview: "A combination of pleasant company and a pleasant setting in his favorite city apparently drew Faulkner on to speak more freely and easily than usual." ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Klein Regrets

Longing for the good old days that never were.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Joe Klein is in a mood these days of regret and nostalgia, longing for the golden age of 1948 (or 1968), when the Democrats were in power, and Harry Truman (and/or Bobby Kennedy) were giving them hell (and/or giving them Aeschylus), and when men were men, not the puppets of pollsters; and politics was (largely) consultant-free.

Politics Lost
How American Democracy Was Trivialized by People Who Think You're Stupid
by Joe Klein
Doubleday, 272 pp., $23.95

This is expressed in his latest book about how American public life has been demeaned and degraded by the pollster-spin doctor industrial complex, and also the fall of the Democrats from majority status. (As a Democrat, Klein tends to lament the second occurrence; as a New Democrat, he seems to realize it's largely their fault.) The result is a strange book, part theory, part screed, and part reminiscence, that has interesting asides but no real coherence, that heads off in directions it never quite gets to, and whose whole is less than the sum of its parts.

Klein is at his best with that perennial favorite—What Ails the Democrats?—a topic he understands well. "While Reagan's Republicans were offering a unified national message, the Democrats presented a fractured image that emphasized the primacy of their interest groups and, bizarrely, divided people according to racial identity a mere decade after liberals had made it a point of honor to oppose racial segregation," he writes.

Democrats may have lost the South in 1964, when their presidents pressed civil rights legislation, but they lost most of the rest of the country in the years following, when they switched from desegregation and assimilation to preferences and identity politics, squandered their clarity and moral authority, and found it impossible to explain to more than a handful of people why, if race shouldn't matter, it was imperative to make it the center of everything; and why, if merit was supposed to be paramount, promoting those who had low grades over those whose performance was better made sense.

There was the surrender to interest groups, the aversion to power, the excuses that never get better. "Reading through the rest of the *Rolling Stone* piece now, I am stunned by how little has changed—and how often, over the years, I have rewritten the same story," Klein tells. "Inevitably, various Democrats predict that the Republican project is too extreme to be sustained. 'It could be a tidal wave,' said Congressman Les Aspin of Wisconsin in 1981, predicting a Democratic renaissance, 'especially if Reagan insists on following the right-wing line on issues like abortion.'"

Inevitably, other Democrats are convinced that the problem is merely technical, that the party has to catch up in field organization or fund-raising or in developing its own think tanks or whatever, and then all will be well. "'We're focusing on modernization, computerization, direct mail,' Democratic National Committee chairman Charles Manatt told me in 1981. 'Inevitably, I consult with various academic sages who put a frame around the larger picture, announcing the transition from the industrial to the information age.'"

This all makes great sense, and one longs for Klein to go on with it; but no, he goes back to the pollsters again—and we are off on a tour of the consulting industry, from its first stirrings with Pat Caddell and Roger Ailes in the 1968 cycle; to 1976, when Caddell is helping steer Jimmy Carter into the White House, and John Sears, one of the first crop of true hired guns in the business, is running Ronald Reagan's campaign into the ground. In fact, the war that year between Reagan and President Gerald Ford seems as nothing compared with the war in the Reagan camp between Sears and Reagan's loyalists from California (Michael Deaver and pollster Dick Wirthlin foremost among them), which rages on for four years with many pitched battles, ending in a palace coup by the candidate, when Reagan himself boots Sears out of the castle on the night of the 1980 New Hampshire primary, when he conquered the elder George Bush.

From there, it is on to 1988, when Dick Gephardt and the elder Bush, two intelligent men with charisma impairment, are turned into unlikely populists by Bob Shrum and Lee Atwater, two men who tended to run the same campaign over and over, with the candidate himself merely an afterthought. (This was a quick fix, but no real improvement: Gephardt took off, but didn't quite make it; Bush became president, but lost four years later, after Atwater had died.)

Things improved somewhat with the advent of Bill Clinton, the only Democrat since John Kennedy with a clue how to run a campaign on the national level, and who knew how to use his consultants without being run by them. But things regressed once again with Al Gore and John Kerry, two empty suits lacking controlling moral authority, a pair of combined moral and policy vacuums into which hordes of consultants would flow. Kerry "seemed eerily intent on replicating every last Democratic mistake," Klein tells us. "There were too many cooks, and there was no clear sense of the

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

broth. The prevailing vagueness, the lack of planning, the absence of clear lines of authority, the peremptory addition of the big-name consultant . . . were familiar symptoms of the Democrats' quadrennial campaign management miasma. Very early on, the whispering began: 'This is just like the Gore campaign.'"

Not quite. Gore ended up, Klein says, in a rage at and harassed by his own team of advisers, who at times cut him off at the knees. "'The consultants were insistent on running the campaign they wanted to run,' said Tony Coelho, a onetime Gore campaign manager. 'If Gore disagreed with them, or wanted to do something else, they sandbagged him.'" As a result, Klein suggests, Gore went into the debates with Bush so enraged at his aides he ignored their suggestions. They warned him to cut back on the sighs; he sighed often and lustily. They warned him to stay in his place, control his aggression, and not to play dominance games with his rival. In the third debate, Gore stalked over to Bush and hovered above him, looking ridiculous. If, as many people believe, Gore lost the election in the debates with his unhinged behavior, Klein suggests his consultants unhinged him—and set him up for his loss.

Whew. Seen in this light, Pollsters 'R Us do come over more or less like a wrecking crew—until you notice the flaw in this theory, which Klein has uncovered himself. "'People think Clinton does what the consultants tell him to do,'" Klein quotes Clinton pollster Stan Greenberg, "'but it's the exact opposite. He picks his consultants according to where he wants to go.'" And there it is. Since 1980, three of four presidents have managed to be reelected, and while all three of them have been deeply involved with consultants (and even paired with them, as Reagan with Wirthlin and Deaver; Clinton with Greenberg, and with the team of Begala and Carville; and Bush II with Karl Rove and some others), they used them in a different way than did the losers, and all always stayed in control. All formed deep bonds with small groups of people who were with them from their early days as governors, who were bound to them by deep ties of personal loyalty, and warmly endorsed their ideas.

There were in their campaigns—or were, after Reagan tossed Sears out the window—no hired guns who were in it wholly for money; no massive turnovers or turf wars and firings; no rival teams of consultants with different agendas. The consultants refined the presentations made of their candidates, but they did not create their personas and policies.

"Clinton," says Klein, "had a sophisticated understanding of how to use his consultants. They could show him the playing field; they could provide numbers and language and sometimes even ideas. They could tell him which issues simply wouldn't fly, and, more important, how to sell the ones he cared about," but never which issues to care about, or what stands to take. When a consultant can do this, it is the fault of the candidate, not the consultant, and still less of the 'system' itself. Long before they were running for president (if they were ever *not* running for president), both Gore and Kerry had authenticity shortfalls, and a habit of trying to have things both ways.

In making the transition from being a New Democrat and border state politician to being a national candidate who had to please his party's liberal donor and interest groups, Gore had a habit of doing total 180s, reversing himself completely on hot-button issues, and then denying (in the face of the evidence) that anything ever had changed. In the early 1980s, he had backed an amendment declaring the fetus a person, then became a supporter of late-term abortion; he had turned around in 1988 on his signature issue, cozying up to a major polluter; he had bragged in 1988 to a Tennessee audience of his pride in planting and tending and reaping tobacco; and told a national audience at his party's 1996 convention that he had been a dedicated foe of the tobacco industry since his sister's death from lung cancer—which occurred in 1984.

John Kerry had gone through much the same thing, selling himself as both a war hero and critic: Lauding the troops, then calling them criminals; voting for the first Iraq war measure in 2002, when it seemed in his own interest, then turning against the war a year later, when Howard Dean was cleaning up among Democratic primary voters.

What happened in these campaigns was that the warring consultants swarmed into a massive principle vacuum that was already baked into the candidates' makeup, and existed before they arrived. Consultants did not, as Klein seems to believe, strip Gore and Kerry of their "authenticity"; they merely exposed and accented their lack of it. The only authentic thing about them was their sense of entitlement, and that had come through loud and clear.

Klein starts his book longing for Bobby, longing specifically for the Robert F. Kennedy who, on the night of April 4, 1968, made his remarkable impromptu and unrehearsed talk to a largely black audience about the murder of Martin Luther King.

"Nearly forty years later," Klein tells us,

> Kennedy's words stand as a sublime example of the substance and music of politics in its grandest form . . . to heal, to educate, and to lead—but also, sadly, they represent the end of an era: the last moments before American political life was overwhelmed by marketing professionals, consultants, and pollsters who, with the flaccid acquiescence of the politicians, have robbed public life of much of its romance and vigor.

Where to begin? Kennedy's remarks took their force not from the age but from a unique and appalling dynamic of violence. They were given on the event of a murder, by a man whose brother had been murdered, and who would be murdered himself two months later. In itself, 1968 was a pit of a year, marked mainly by meanness and terrible leadership, when all of the candidates fell well below the occasion: If there was much education or healing or leadership coming from the likes of Hubert Humphrey, Eugene McCarthy, Richard Nixon, or Spiro Agnew, I seem to have missed it, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

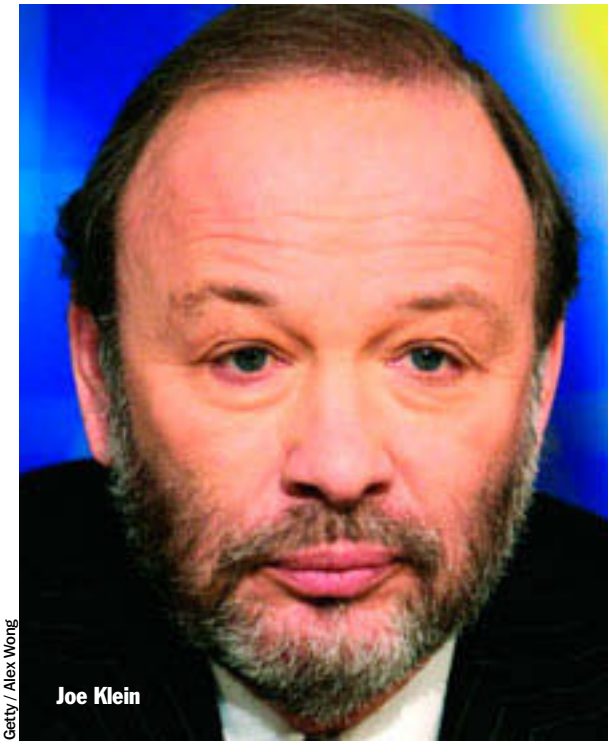
so, too, apparently, did everyone else. The 1968 election was one of the worst ever run, with two of the most flawed and inadequate candidates ever presented; and so, too, for different reasons, was the election that followed.

That was followed by the most inadequate president of the 20th century, and vigor had to be brought back by Reagan, who would turn 70 shortly after being sworn in. If it is true that the pre-consultant quartet of Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy was infinitely better than the quartet of Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter that followed, the quartet after them—Reagan, Bush 41, Clinton, and Bush 43—was also more competent, suggesting consultants had little to do with it. Consultants also had nothing to do with most of the presidents of the previous century, many of whom were absolute nullities. No romance and vigor for them.

Like Henry Adams, who had known Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, and still insisted he had never met a great man (because neither fit his template or belonged to his family), Klein can't see authenticity where it exists. The two dominant figures of the 1990s—Newt Gingrich, and the unforgettable William J. Clinton—were a great many things, but bland and controlled were not two of them.

George H.W. Bush may have been less than authentic as a candidate and as a consumer of pork rinds, but he was as fully authentic as the man who had joined the Navy in 1942 on his 18th birthday (and became the youngest pilot in the armed forces) when Saddam crossed the border into Kuwait. (And let us pause here to give thanks for the focus groups: We can thank our lucky stars that the Willie Horton ads worked to the effect that Michael Dukakis was not in the Oval Office when Saddam invaded, or Iraq might be in Kuwait—and Saudi Arabia—and the region itself a much bigger mess.)

As for George W., Klein liked him somewhat before 9/11, when neither he nor anyone else stood for anything interesting, and while we were still on our ten-year vacation from history. But the more authentic Bush gets, the more Klein dislikes him, to the point that by the end he is channeling E.J. Dionne (and/or Democratic National Committee boilerplate), insisting that the war in Iraq is a catastrophe, cooked up for wholly political purposes. This has it all backwards: Bush took a huge risk going into Iraq, while the political thing would have been to rest on his laurels (and sky-high ratings) from the war in Afghanistan, while kicking the Iraq can down the road for the next administration to handle—as his father, and Clinton, had done. No one was more "authentic" than Bush in the 2004 election, when he made it abundantly clear he was prepared to lose in defending his vision, and he quite nearly did so.


Getty / Alex Wong

Joe Klein

"If you want [the people] to take a risk, you're going to have to take one yourself," Klein preaches earlier. "Sadly, most politicians are neither risk-takers nor leaders. They are followers—of convention, of public opinion . . . while leadership is an art." By these standards, Bush is a risk-taker and a leader; but Klein doesn't see it, as he doesn't like where Bush is leading. He also says that the administration is a train wreck, beyond hope of recovery. Perhaps. But in his second term Reagan was considered washed up and exposed as a lightweight, while the conservative movement was seen as a "detour" and already over. In his second term, Truman, with poll ratings a lot lower than Bush's, was considered an absolute failure, awash in corruption and crony-based scandals, who had "lost" China and mistakenly gotten us into a "war of choice" in Korea, a war much more bloody than Iraq.

In reality, authenticity is alive and well, and nowhere more so than at the 2004 Republican convention in New York, awash in pizzazz as well as testosterone, with Bush, John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, and Ahnuld, unconstrained egos and risk-takers all. But they support the war, and Klein doesn't, so he sees nothing there but contrivance and vitriol. Actually, one can be "authentic" (and brave) on different sides of big issues: The late Paul Wellstone was plenty authentic, as is Joe Lieberman, but Klein mentions neither. If the Democrats had more Wellstones and Liebermans, and fewer Gores and Kerrys, they would be much better off, and so would the country.

Good and bad politicians have emerged in all eras, often together, and often the worst have preceded the best and most brilliant: James Buchanan and Abraham Lincoln; Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan; Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The same public life produced all of these people. Eras do not make politicians; politicians make eras. There is nothing much wrong with bad politics that good politicians can't cure. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wordcross Backwords

A nine-letter word for a species of puzzle.

BY MATT GAFFNEY

IFC Films

Wordplay is a documentary about a crossword puzzle tournament. Hey, get back here!

Okay, so I admit it's probably impossible to make a truly great movie about a subject as solitary, cerebral, and ultimately frivolous as crosswords. But first-time feature director Patrick Creadon has created what I think real film critics term a "good little movie"—nothing that's going to change your view of the world forever, but worth a moviegoer's time by a healthy margin, and likely to become *the* film on its chosen subject for many years to come.

Wordplay
Directed by Patrick Creadon

Actually, Creadon has created not merely a good little movie, but a *very* good little movie, which might translate into an extra half-star on a four-star scale. What pushes the film into "very good" territory is very good fortune: "We got real lucky in a hundred ways while filming this," Creadon told me. The most important two of those hundred are:

Lucky Break #1: Creadon happened to choose 2005 as the year he'd chronicle the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament (ACPT). By virtually unanimous consent among veterans, 2005's final championship round turned out to be the most exciting in the 28-year history of the annual competition, and Creadon got the whole thing on tape—including the bizarre, no-way-that-just-happened final twist that wound up deciding the winner.

Lucky Break #2: In the months before the competition, Creadon traveled around the country, camera in tow, profiling nine tournament entrants at their homes. He'd been steered toward these nine by ACPT director Will Shortz based on who Shortz felt had the best shot at winning. Four of the nine entrants' stories were left on the cutting room floor, since they did not wind up fitting into the film's ultimate narrative; but two of the five who did make the cut were highly fortunate selections who might reasonably have been left off the original list. I can't say more without ruining the ending, but *Wordplay* would have been severely diminished if these two hadn't been among the original nine selected for profiling.

A movie about a crossword puzzle tournament needs padding to get to 94 minutes, and *Wordplay*'s padding is fine fur indeed: an eclectic crew of celebrities talking about their crossword puzzle experiences. What a slate Creadon somehow managed to recruit: Bill Clinton expounding on matters cruciverbal (asked why people solve crosswords, he replies, "I don't know, they're just fun," which is actually the correct answer); Bob Dole in lovable loser mode ("the whole 1996 election was a puzzle to me"); and *Daily Show* host Jon Stewart solving a *Times* crossword and repeatedly threatening Shortz when the clues get too "cute," as Stewart puts it. Yankees pitcher Mike Mussina and folk duo Indigo Girls also make worthwhile appearances, and Creadon generally elicits meaningful crossword thoughts from his celebrity subjects that add real value to the film. The one exception is Ken Burns, whose rather overwrought comments about crossword puzzles' role in society might well have been omitted.

Wordplay began in its director's mind as a film about Shortz and the *New York Times* crossword, but early in the process (according to Creadon), "Will told me, 'Look, this tournament is a big part of my life, so if you're going to make a movie about me, it should be about the tournament, too.'" The ACPT was started in 1978 by the genial and media-savvy Shortz, who

Matt Gaffney is the author of Gridlock: Crossword Puzzles and the Mad Geniuses Who Create Them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was then a 25-year-old law school escapee earning $10,000 a year working at a puzzle magazine company. Today he is crossword editor at the *Times*, and, 28 years after he first christened it, Shortz is still directing the ever-growing competition.

One hundred and forty-nine people attended that first tournament, about a third of the number that has been showing up in recent years. *Wordplay* may change that dramatically; one crossword insider told me he wouldn't be surprised if the ACPT doubled in size next year. Entrants solve seven puzzles over the weekend, which tournament judges score using a system based on the solvers' accuracy and speed. The top three scorers then compete in a tense final round on oversized dry-erase board crossword grids before a packed-house audience.

Wordplay does a good job of capturing the feel of the entire weekend: the wacky side events, the nostalgia for years past, the once-a-year friendships that build over time, the serious-but-not-too-serious intensity level of competitors. One of the ways Creadon makes the most of his subject's limitations is his clever use of graphics to sex up puzzle specifics for the audience. In one scene, filmed at the Colorado home of top solver Al Sanders, Sanders attempts to solve a crossword at his kitchen table in less than two minutes. The camera stays fixed on the puzzle the entire time it's being solved. (It actually takes Sanders two minutes and two seconds to finish it, which bums him out a little.) But early in the process the screen splits, and a graphic representation of the puzzle grid fills up with the letters Sanders is writing in real time, as he's writing them. Who knew a guy solving a crossword puzzle from start to finish could be filmworthy, much less semi-riveting? But it is.

Another smart move by Creadon was tapping crossword legend Merl Reagle to wax hilarious on his craft. Reagle is the greatest American crossword puzzle constructor of all time, according to an informal poll I recently conducted among solvers and constructors at *www.cruciverb.com*. More important for the film, he's also famously funny, and a master at translating the arcane world of crossword puzzle people to a general audience. In one scene, the not-under-nourished Reagle points out the window of his car to a nearby Dunkin' Donuts sign and notes that "if you take the D and put it at the end, you get Unkind Donuts. I've definitely had a few of those in my day."

Don't expect to see many more documentaries about crossword puzzles in years to come, because *Wordplay* is a category-killer. It probably can't be done better than this. Creadon has maximized the surprising potential that existed in filming an activity that consists of writing tiny letters in tiny boxes. Toss in the smiles he received from Lady Luck, and an actual film critic might give his movie three-and-a-half stars out of four, and an easy recommendation. That works for me as well. ♦

Who Said What?

It's a Mumble in the Jungle on Miami's mean streets.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The writer-director Michael Mann spent more than $125 million to make the movie version of his 1980s TV show *Miami Vice*. Last year's hurricanes destroyed his sets. His cast and crew were expelled from location shooting in the Dominican Republic. The trials, tribulations, and torments were legion, especially for an intense control freak of a moviemaker like Mann, whose similarly portentous and style-heavy films include *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Insider*, *Ali*, and *Collateral*. And now America will be able to experience *Miami Vice* in all its glory, feasting like the starved survivors of a drought on wondrous Mann dialogue such as:

JAMIE FOXX: So *garble* you gonna *unclear* or are we gonna bloiphernatter?

COLIN FARRELL: I wonna ghufurrr unless the *mumble*.

JAMIE FOXX: Got that right, muthababa.

Yes, even though Mann went through hell to get his film made, he is releasing it to thousands of theaters and millions of moviegoers without having bothered to ensure that the words spoken by the actors are even minimally audible, or comprehensible, to his audience.

I think *Miami Vice* is about a squad of undercover cops who get in over their heads when they try to bring down a Colombian drug ring responsible for the murder of some FBI agents. I say "I think" because this movie requires a lot of guessing, almost as much as watching a television show on Univision would require for someone who'd taken a year of high-school Spanish three decades earlier.

Miami Vice
Directed by Michael Mann

Jamie Foxx and Colin Farrell aren't even the worst dialogue offenders in *Miami Vice*. The Chinese actress Gong Li plays a Colombian drug dealer who lives, for reasons that aren't entirely clear, in a suburb of Havana. (Her character's mother was a translator in Angola, if that helps. Oh, it doesn't?) She and Farrell share several lengthy, mournful, talky scenes in which they both look smashing. The thing is, I'm pretty sure Gong Li doesn't really speak English, and learned her part phonetically. You can make out maybe 20 percent of her lines.

Meanwhile, Foxx's love interest is

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx

Universal Pictures

played by a gorgeous black actress from England named Naomie Harris. Even though Harris is playing a Miami cop, she puts on a Brooklyn-Bronx accent that comes and goes like the Michelangelo-talking women at Prufrock's party. Let me now interrupt this review for the surprise announcement that Naomie Harris has been awarded the coveted 2006 "What the Hell Is She Saying?" Prize from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, for her work in *Miami Vice* and in this month's box-office bonanza, *Pirates of the Caribbean 2*. As a voodoo priestess with black teeth in *Pirates*, Harris delivers huge chunks of crucial expository information in a really thick hey-mon Islands sing-song that makes interpreting her words more difficult than reading *Finnegans Wake*.

If there was one thing you could count on from the Old Hollywood, it was that you would hear the dialogue. I don't ever remember having a whispered conversation in a revival house questioning what it was that Bogey or Bette just said. Even song lyrics were delivered with crisp clarity. It is one of the extreme peculiarities of the new Hollywood that, despite extraordinary technical innovations in the use of sound, you get auditory catastrophes like *Miami Vice* that wouldn't have passed muster in the halls of fourth-rate studios like Republic or Monogram back in the day. If you're going to spend extravagantly, why not throw in a few hundred thou to get Gong Li and Naomie Harris back into the sound lab to do more "looping" (the term for rerecording lines of dialogue during post-production)?

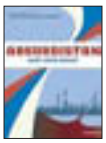
The answer is that the directors and producers think they have a lot more to worry about when it comes to sound. Getting the music and the sound effects during the chase scene to work together, or getting the right machine gun rat-a-tat, is considered more crucial to the movie's success. And since directors are often working under the pressure of a fixed release date, they are forced to make compromises.

In the case of *Miami Vice*, though, there are far too many compromises—not just when it comes to the dialogue. The movie begins with a 10-minute scene in a Miami club in which our undercover squad is investigating a guy, or a couple of guys, who are either running prostitutes or hiring prostitutes or beating up prostitutes. Then it turns out that everything we've just seen doesn't matter at all, because Farrell gets a phone call and suddenly the plot shifts to the Colombian drug ring and we never get back to the prostitutes. Which kind of raises the question, "Who's helping the poor prostitutes?"

Even worse than the plot holes is the unrelieved gloom. *Miami Vice* is always watchable and has some magnificent shots, but everybody glowers and frowns like it's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. A movie with the word "vice" in the title should have a little bit of dirty-minded fun in it. There isn't a single moment of levity in the entire two-hour-plus running time. For his next birthday, Michael Mann's friends should all chip in and buy him a sense of humor. And a boom microphone. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Brief



***Absurdistan* by Gary Shteyngart (Random House, 352 pp., $24.95).** To open the second novel by Gary Shteyngart, a Russian emigré, is to be whisked away to his fictional former Soviet republic with all those hallmarks of the Third World: sectarian violence, abandoned construction sites, and abysmal cell phone reception. Though the subject material—political corruption, militant violence, and oil dependency—is dour, Shteyngart's novel manages to remain lighthearted because its embellished reality is, well, absurd.

Our protagonist on this parodic romp between Absurdistan, St. Petersburg, and New York is Misha Vainberg, the embodiment of aristocratic indulgence, who can't seem to stop eating, sweating, or self-medicating with ample doses of *Zoloftushka* and *Prozakchik*. The son of a wealthy Russian entrepreneur, Misha moonlights as a liberal arts student at Accidental College, but before long he finds himself back in St. Petersburg with little direction save for satisfying his rampant appetite. In a failed attempt to acquire a U.S. visa, the well-intentioned dolt finds himself in Absurdistan, a parallel universe where even the prostitutes work for Halliburton.

Moved by the plight of the impoverished Absurdisvanis, Misha embarks on a global public relations campaign to encourage the flow of international aid. One Svani bureaucrat bemoans the main problem Misha's project will face: "The way 'Absurdisvani' is pronounced and spelled, it's utterly impossible for an American to feel anything for it. You have to be able to use a country as a child's first name to get anywhere. Rwanda Jones . . . Timor Jackson. And then you got this Republika Absurdisvani. Hopeless."

It is this sort of sardonic breeziness that makes *Absurdistan* such a pleasure to read. As with many satires, however, the jokes get repetitive. Hardly a page goes by without some mention of Misha's enormous girth, and Shteyngart has fun with the fact that his narrator is a narrow-minded halfwit. But Misha can only hit his manservant over the head with his shoe so many times before one begins to feel as though Shteyngart is hitting the reader over the head with these jokes.

Though the drollery grows stale at times, at its best *Absurdistan* is the epitome of 21st-century globalization. By turns an indictment of commercialization and a celebration of cultural hybridity, Shteyngart's novel would be a great addition to a time capsule, an instructive morsel for future generations who hope to understand the state of the world in 2006.

—Abigail Lavin

***Club Life: The Games Golfers Play* by John Steinbreder (Taylor, 192 pp., $19.95).** John Steinbreder makes no pretense about his contribution to the annals of human understanding: It sits squarely between the signage at the club house entrance and the storm shelter at the end of the eighteenth hole. His book may not improve your swing, but it will give you a better understanding of the things that really matter about the game, including the men's grill room, club governing committees, and the diminished presence of caddies to haul your sticks around the course.

There is a special place in Steinbreder's heart for club admissions officers, club dress codes, club food, and club staff. He devotes an entire chapter to the subject of club logos, complete with analysis of his personal collection of garments adorned with club insignia from around the world. We also get his personal experiences with nasty club managers, his refined preferences on club food, his highly scholastic analysis of parking lot layouts, and where he thinks the best location is for a post-game cocktail.

While *Club Life* is funny, it does drag in places, especially near the end. At 192 big-type, small-sized pages, the book is a breeze, but the second half found me fishing for more of the hilarious anecdotes that decorated the first. By embracing its position as a quirky stocking stuffer for golf enthusiasts, and abandoning its pretense to be the bible of golf social commentary, *Club Life* could have jumped from a fun read to a must read.

Steinbreder's targets include those who insist on making phone calls on the course. He recalls "one of our members talking on his Nokia as he stood by a pay phone near the range, as if the transgression was a little less egregious since there was a legal land phone in the immediate vicinity. The caller looked so guilty and secretive, however, you would have thought he was selling crack rather than checking his messages."

His anecdotes are not confined to the mundane, however; in one, he makes note of a story about Willie Nelson on the links. When confronted by an employee of the course he was playing for wearing jeans, Nelson promptly dressed himself in proper attire from the clubhouse. The women's clubhouse.

Condensed to maybe half its length, with all stories and no analysis of "the sounds of golf," this book would be perfect. As it is, Steinbreder's repertoire of witty commentary and literary twists is enough to make this book a suitable gift for your father-in-law on his sixtieth birthday; perhaps, even, a step up from the usual golfing tees or club covers.

—Jillian Bandes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Parody

We heard from many people that the news is just too depressing. Obviously, we can't sugar-coat what's going on, but there are cases where we can be more solution-oriented.
—Katie Couric, USA Today, July 17

CBS NEWS
524 West 57th St., New York, NY, 10019

CBS EVENING NEWS
September, 12, 2006 / TRANSCRIPT
page 4
---

piling up in the morgue.

KATIE COURIC: That was Tiffany Leer in Beirut.
Tonight, on our Solutions segment, CBS News takes an in-depth look at the crisis in the Middle East.

Arabs, Israelis, Sunnis, Shiites, Hezbollah, intifada, Palestinians, peace process. When it comes to the Middle East, sometimes it seems like we've been listening to the same CD over and over and over again. Some of you may remember that, on that CD, there's an old joke that says the Jews and Muslims in the Middle East might get along better if they all just started behaving like Christians.

Well, here at CBS News, our Solutions team got to thinking that maybe that old joke isn't such a joke after all. What if the Muslim Arabs and Jews of Israel put aside their longstanding differences and started acting like Christians?

Here to talk about it with us is the Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, and a world-renowned expert on peace and reconciliation issues in the Middle East and other global hot spots.

Dr. Edgar, as a former six-term Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania who was elected from an overwhelmingly Republican district, you know all about ugly partisanship and healthy compromise. But as an ordained Methodist minister, you know something about Christianity, too, and how it has solved real-world problems in real time.

BOB EDGAR: That's right, Katie. In fact, I've just returned from a fascinating, three-day-long, fact-finding mission to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED